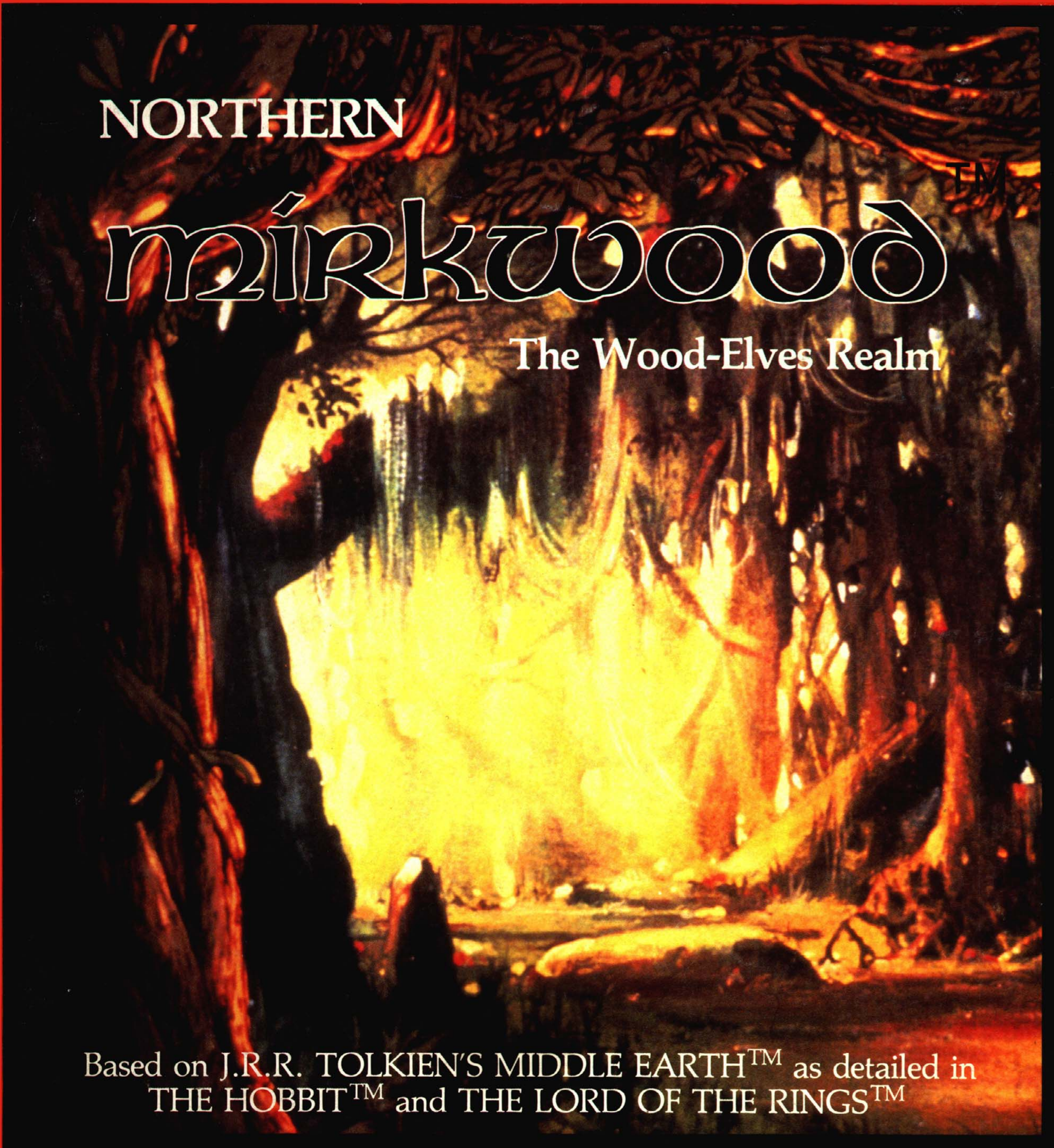
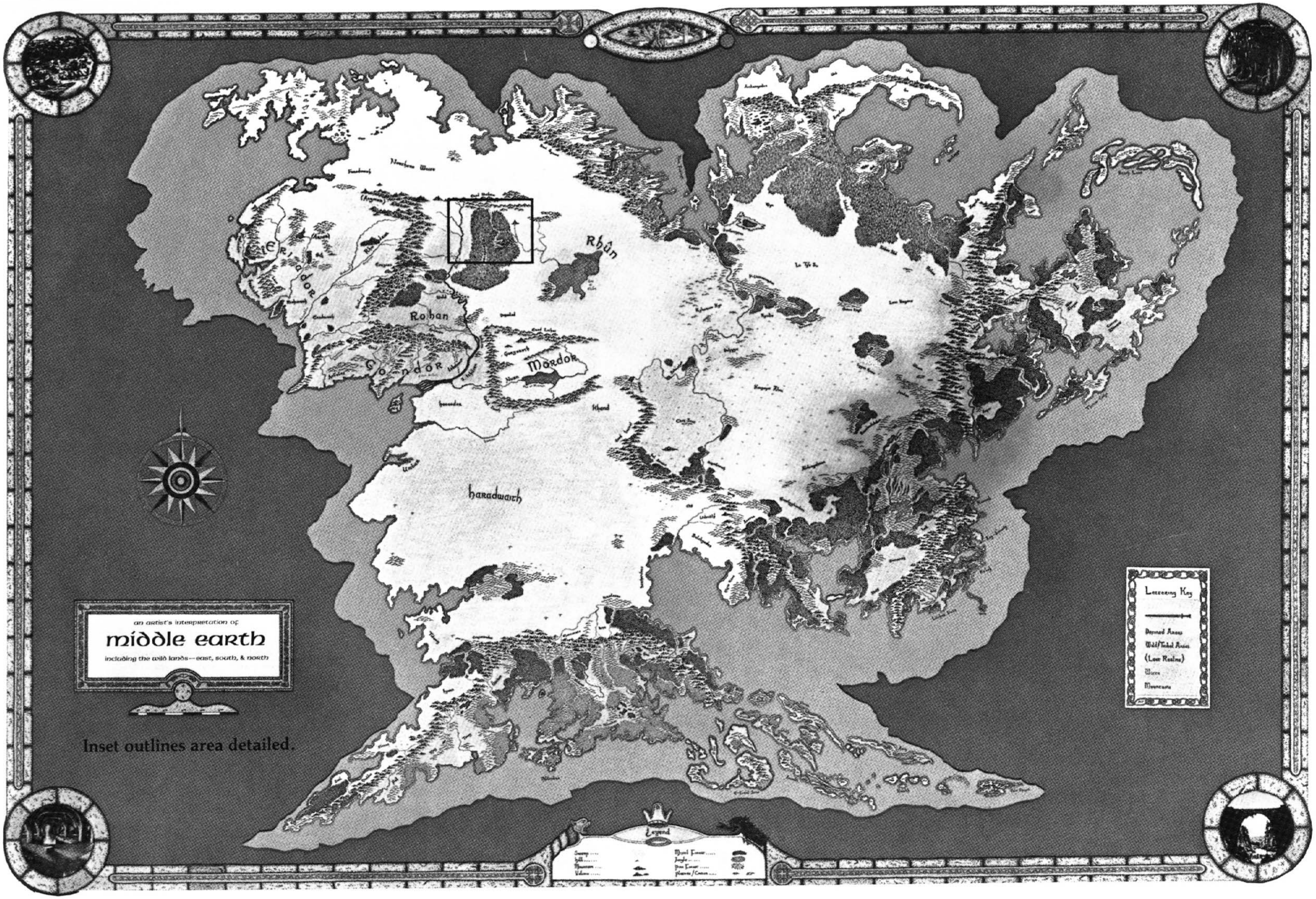


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REALM OF THE WOOD-ELVES

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Produced and distributed by IRON CROWN ENTERPRISES, Inc.
P.O. Box 1605, Charlottesville, VA 22902. Stock #ME2600.

ISBN 0-915795-08-6

1.0 NOTES ON THE FEATURES AND USE OF THE MIDDLE EARTH SERIES

COMMENTARY

This series is intended as a tool for gamemasters who wish to have a strong working foundation for fantasy role playing campaigns based in J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle-earth. The modules detail specific regions of the continent of Endor, and attempt to give the reader a view of the physical, intellectual, and spiritual structures of the given area; politics, culture, geography, climate, and magic are all included. Since these territories cannot be fully described in any modest tome, emphasis is given to the dominant and/or primary features. Where it is possible, "typical" layouts are provided, giving the reader an approximate idea of what would be found in a given place or a similar setting. All of the data provided is aimed at giving a picture of part of Middle-earth, and the gamemaster is encouraged to use these resources to build upon; certain vague areas and details that could not reasonably be included in the modules can be defined by using the foundation provided in conjunction with one's creativity. The invaluable source material found in Tolkien's works and the continental map of Endor are ideal aids, and act to stimulate this process.

Each module covers certain citadels and settlements with great care to detail. Nonetheless, these works are not intended as "ready-to-run" campaigns. The gamemaster is given the basic information necessary to understand and visualize a part of Middle-earth. This data, combined with examples and whatever source material the gamemaster wishes to employ, will enable he/she to add whatever color and detail is deemed necessary to a given campaign. Any fantasy role playing rules system may be used, and any form of campaign can occur, so long as the gamemaster and players are satisfied that it fits their requirements. ICE provides a descriptive view of the continent, with a general overview and certain key structures and concepts; beyond the given foundation, it is up to the individual user to set up the campaign. Creative guidelines, not absolutes, are emphasized.

The series also provides interesting source material for those desiring to understand the nature of a particular region of Middle-earth. Each module is based on extensive research and attempts to meet the high standards associated with the Tolkien legacy. Where the material is interpretive and/or speculative great care has been taken to insure that the conclusions fit into the patterns and schemes that have been defined. In these areas, the modules aim at providing the reader with the flavor of the region, no more. Stimulation of the creative processes is the goal, and ICE does not intend such material to be the sole or "proper" interpretation. In addition, always remember that Tolkien's works are the ultimate sources. What is provided in this series, however, is a consistent view of all of the continent. We hope that this will help the reader to delve deeply into the wondrous world that is Middle-earth.

1.1 DEFINITIONS AND TERMS

The following subsections provide handy reference and informational data. For a more in depth analysis of certain terms, consult the various sources (see selected reading section of module).

1.11 ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Meaning
A.	Adunaic
Ag.	agility*
AT.	armor type
bp.	bronze piece(s)
B.S.	Black Speech
Ch.	charisma*
Cir.	Cirth
Co.	constitution*
cp.	copper piece(s)
CRIT.	critical strike
Du.	Dunlending tongues
E.	Edain
El.	Eldarin
Em.	empathy*
EP.	exhaustion point(s)
1.A.	First Age
F.A.	Fourth Age
GM.	gamemaster
gp.	gold piece
H.	Hobbitish (Westron variant)
Har.	Haradrim
Hob.	*The Hobbit*
In.	intuition*
Int.	intelligence*
ip.	iron piece(s)
Kd.	Kuduk (Ancient "Hobbitish")
Kh.	Khuzdul (Dwarvish)
LotR.	*Lord of the Rings* (I = Book I, etc.)
Me.	memory*
ME.	Middle-earth
mp.	mithril piece(s)
MP.	movement point(s)
Or.	Orkish dialects
Pr.	presence*
Q.	Quenya
Qu.	quickness*
R.	Rohirric
Re.	reasoning*
Rh.	Rhovanion tongues
RR.	resistance roll
S.	Sindarin
S.A.	Second Age
SD.	self discipline*
sp.	silver piece(s)
S.T.	Silvan tongues
St.	strength*
T.A.	Third Age
Teng.	Tengwar
tp.	tin piece(s)
V.	Variag
W.	Westron (Common)
Wis.	wisdom*
Wo.	Wose (Druedain)

* references to stats

1.12 DEFINITIONS.

The majority of unique terms and translations from *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* are not described below; rather they are to be found elsewhere in the text, in the sections concerning places, inhabitants, etc.

Armor Type (AT): Armor is the basic protective capability assigned to the material covering the body. Armor type refers to the specific kind of covering found on a given character/creature (e.g. AT 15 refers to "full chain," chain mail covering most of the body in the form of a shirt and leggings - or any equivalent). Armor type is synomymous with "armor class."

Beijabar: Called *Beornings* in the Late Third Age, this dispersed group of large men has a confused origin. They are a Northmen branch which apparently became distinct in elder times. Their numbers are few, and some have distinguished them as a clan rather than a separate people. Culturally, and to some degree physically, however, they are unique. This group has traditionally lived in small groups or single families on well-tended "manors." Some like Beorn's line, have favored relative lowlands, while the majority reside in the passes and foothills of the Misty Mountains or Ered Mithrin. In each case, their presence is extremely subtle.

The Carrock is a holy site to the Beijabar and has long been guarded by the line which spawns Beorn in the late Third Age. These folk are extremely hospitable to those few they consider friends, and produce breads and honeys of unparalleled quality. Of other men, they are most friendly with the folk of Dale. The Dale-men are apparently their closest kin, possibly explaining the early settlement near so remote a mountain.

Bajaegahar is the equivalent label among the other Northmen, for the Beijabar use a more ancient Rhovanion tongue.

Channeling: Channeling represents the power from those on high (e.g. the Valar) as channeled through their followers, other spell users, or the source being. It is the power of the dieties as manifested in the "everyday" world. Professions using channeling: cleric, healer, animist, ranger, astrologer and sorcerer.

Character: See "player character."

Combat Roll: A *roll* representing a combat swing or missile attack.

Concussion Hits: Accumulated damage to the body, possibly leading to shock and unconsciousness. NOTE: *The term "hits" will sometimes be used instead of "concussion hits."*

Counting of Coup: (Rh. "Cunnian Bearn") An Éothraim practice that may have origins further east. It involves the touching of an enemy without inflicting harm. Some use their weapons or a stick, but the greatest honor is given those who touch their foe with a bare hand. To be successfully touched is to be humiliated. No one can be a lord among the Éothraim without having counted coup at least once.

Critical Strike (CRIT): An especially effective swing, missile attack, or spell which penetrates the target's basic defenses and results in some special or additional damage, something more than the typical concussion hit effect.

Defensive Bonus (DB): The total subtraction from the combat roll due to the defender's advantages, including bonuses for defender dexterity, shield, superiority of armor, position, and magic items.

Dunedain: These high men were those Edain ("fathers of men") who settled on the island continent of Numenor, far to the west of Middle-earth. The Dunedain conquered and/or colonized many areas along the western, southern, and eastern coasts of Endor during the Second Age, and were great lords among men. Unfortunately their great desire for power (at least among some) led to the destruction of their home island in the middle of the Second Age. This "Downfall" occurred as a result of their invasion of the Undying Lands and challenge to the Valar. Those called the "Faithful" opposed the policies and hatred of elves which led to the Downfall, and were saved when the isle sank. They later founded the kingdoms of Arnor and Gondor (in the North and South of northwestern Middle-earth). Many "unfaithful" groups survived in the various colonies of the Dunedain established in happier times (e.g. the "Black Numenoreans" of Umbar). The term Dunedain refers to the Numenoreans and their descendants in Middle-earth, groups which possessed considerable physical and mental strength, longevity, and a rich culture based in great part on elven ways. They are but one group of the Edain, a collective grouping of men with relatively advanced culture and traces of Elvish blood who had aided in the wars against Morgoth in the First Age. Trans: S. "Edain of the West." Sing. Dunadan.

Dwarves (Khazad): The dwarves are descendants of the Seven Fathers of their kind and tied to the Vala Aulë (The Smith). They are said to have come from stone. Their seven lines or houses settled a variety of separate areas, usually in or by mountains. Dwarves are rather short, about 4 to 5 feet in height (the women slightly less), stocky, and of ruddy complexion. They have deep-set eyes, dark hair, and beards (which they grow long and often braid). Resistant to diseases and extremely strong, they live an average of 250 years, and often to the age of 400. They have superior sight underground and in places of near total darkness. Their crafts are superb, and they are unsurpassed workers of stone. Like orcs, they are masters of metalwork; but unlike the goblins, they achieve a sense of beauty as well as strength and utility. No race mines as well as dwarves. Relatively unfertile and lacking women (who constitute less than a third of their kind), they rarely sire young - or even marry. Dwarves know of magic and certain enchantments, but generally scoff at the ways of conjurers or the use of spells, preferring instead to use such power in the making of physical items.

Dwarves speak Khuzdul, a guarded tongue known by virtually no one but themselves, and inscribe using the Angerthas Moria, a variant of the Cirth (a runic script). Khuzdul is marked by harsh consonants and uses three-consonant patterns to denote common concepts. For example, "KZD" structures refer to the Dwarves or things essential to the Dwarven identity (e.g. Khazad — Dwarves, Khuzdul — Dwarvish).

The two kindreds discussed here are those of Durin the Deathless and Balli (I) Stonehand. The former, "Durin's Folk," is the oldest and most revered of the Seven Houses. They are identified by their unusually long, forked beards which are often braided and worn tucked into their belts; hence the label "Longbeards." Balli's Folk is an "eastern group," and its kin sport each wear a ring of dark, glassy stone on the small finger of their left hand. Both Houses favor colorful, hooded clothing and hand arms. Although many are proficient with standard bows, they generally employ crossbows when a need for missile weapons arises. Dwarves like mechanical devices.

The ancestral home of Durin's Folk is at Khazad-dûm ("Moria" or "Hadhodrond" among the Elves). Balli's House is centered at Akhuzdah ("Ahulè").

Easterlings: A generalized grouping of a tremendous variety of races occupying Middle--earth as far west as Rhun. A GM should note that the term essentially corresponds to "any group of men whose ways are alien and whose lands are unknown," at least in the eyes of an occupant of western Middle-earth.

Essence: The essence is that which is common to all things, living and dead, organic and inorganic. It represents a force and order which defines, or helps define, the ways of the world, and acts as a source for some forms of spell power - for example, magic. Professions using essence: magician, illusionist, alchemist, monk, sorcerer, and mystic.

First Age (I.A.): The first recorded Age of Middle-earth. Its beginnings date back to a period relatively soon after the dawn of time as we know it and its ending point was marked by the overthrow of Morgoth (the "Black Enemy"), Sauron's overlord and mentor. The tales of the First Age are, for the most part, found in J.R.R. Tolkien's *Unfinished Tales* and *The Silmarillion*. These works are not used or described within this module, since we are focusing on the Third and Fourth Ages. ICE uses I.A. to denote the First Age and F.A. to indicate Fourth Age dates.

Forodwaith: Term which refers to region and people of the Far North of northwestern Endor. The "Northern Waste" is part of this region, and the "Talath Oiohelka" (debased Q. "Ever-icy Plain") is a section of the Waste.

The nomadic Lossoth, a group of stocky, relatively short men of the Far North are often called "Forodwaith" or "Snowmen." A poor and primitive people, they live on big game and whatever fish and sea creatures they can acquire. Their culture appears based on stonework, bone, and whatever wood they can trade for (although their contact with men is severely limited). They also make use of certain metals, notably copper. Their populations are generally centered on the western sea shores, but certain small units occasionally make their way inlahd to the northern river valleys further east.

Fourth Age (F.A.): The fourth recorded age of Middle-earth, the "Age of Men." It began with the passing of the Three Rings over the sea. During the Fourth Age most of the elves departed Middle-earth for the Undying Lands; other non-mannish races such as dwarves and hobbits began to seek solitude, for their ways were no longer understood by the overlords of the continent - men.

Fumble: An especially ineffective swing or mishandling of the weapon which may put the attacker in a disadvantageous position and/or damage him.

Gamemaster (GM): Also known as DM or dungeonmaster, the referee, judge, etc. The ultimate authority in a given fantasy role playing game. This person is responsible for giving life to the game by monitoring world events and providing the necessary imaginative aids. He/she interprets rules, controls creatures and non-player characters, and maintains play.

God: Not the gamemaster, but Eru - the creator of the world, including Middle-earth.

Hits (Concussion Hits): The amount of damage an individual can sustain before he loses consciousness due to shock and pain. Death resulting from massive system shock occurs if the accumulated damage points reach the total of hits + constitution.

Initiative: The sum of all factors affecting the speed of a swing.

Maneuver: An action performed by a character that requires unusual concentration under pressure, or risk (i.e., climbing a rope, balancing on a ledge, leaping a chasm). The action must be of a physically active nature, not "static."

Maneuver Roll: A *roll* representing an attempted maneuver.

Martial Arts: Forms of attack and self-defense which involve specialized mental and physical training and coordination. Much of unarmed combat and combat using weapon kata falls into this category.

Melee: Hand-to-hand combat (i.e. combat not using projectiles, spells, or missile weapons).

Mentalism: That realm/source of power which is connected with the internal patterns of the spell user. It is the manipulation of one's own essence to produce spells. Professions using mentalism: mentalist, seer, lay healer, bard, mystic, and astrologer.

Middle-earth: Endore; Endor; the Middle Land; the Middle Continent. One continental land mass found in the world. It was not itself the entirety of the world, although the action and events found in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* is focused on the Third Age of Middle-earth and the very beginning of the Fourth Age of Middle-earth.

Mirkwood: The great stretch of western forest called by the Elves *Taur-e-Ndaedlos* (S. "Forest of Great Fear"). Like the "Old Forest" and the "Fangorn," it is a remnant of the great forest which once covered most of northwestern Endor. Prior to the end of the first millenium T.A. it was known as "Greenwood the Great," but Sauron's Shadow changed the very essence of the flora and fauna of the region. Northern Mirkwood is that area north of the Men-i-Naugrim.

Morgoth: The renegade Vala (see Valar below) who coveted lordship over the world, and possibly all existence. Morgoth (lit. "Black Enemy" S.) was the embodiment and focus of darkness - evil incarnate - and established lordship over northern Middle-earth during the First Age. From his hold at Thangorodrim in the Iron Mountains (Ered Engrin) he began to dominate the whole of the continent; only the elves of Beleriand, the Edain, certain dwarvish groups, etc. opposed him. Morgoth created many foul races of beings by perverting the living (for he could not create life itself): orcs in mockery of elves, trolls as dark counterparts for ents, etc. No power aside from Eru himself, or the other Valar, could withstand the might of this demigod; he could alter mountain ranges, cast flames across hundreds of miles, and send legions of warriors - including dragons and balrogs - on campaigns of conquest. His terror was unparalleled. Nonetheless, Morgoth's strength waned with each creation. His Iron Crown was his greatest prize, for it embraced the light of the sun and the moon in the form of the three Great Jewels (the Silmarilli) and contained much of the Black Enemy's own power. Morgoth was finally overthrown by the host of the Valar in a cataclysmic battle which sank much of northwestern Middle-earth and altered the world. Sauron, one of the Enemy's lieutenants, survived the apocalypse.

Nazgûl: Also called the "Ringwraiths" or simply "The Nine," these were nine great lords of men who were enslaved by Sauron in the Second Age. Each had apparently coveted great power and accepted one of the Nine Rings of Men wrought by Sauron. Since the rings were ruled by the One Ring and keyed to the Dark Lord, the Nazgûl became slaves. As time passed they became immortal in a sense, undead, and no longer possessed bodies associated with the living. Essentially, they became "shadows" of great power, and acted as Sauron's most trusted lieutenants. The Witch King of Angmar, also called the lord of Morgul, was their chief; he was the Lord of the Nazgûl and possessed the greatest power of independent action. The Nazgûl were afraid of water, some fires, and the name "Elbereth." They were virtually blind by usual standards, but possessed amazing senses of smell etc. which helped offset this weakness and gave them tremendous advantages in darkness. Their power was lessened during the day, and Khamul, the second to the Chief, had considerable fear of the light. Some of the others may have shared all or part of this flaw. Nonetheless, these wraiths generally overcame their weaknesses, and were rarely stayed for more than brief intervals. Also called "Black Riders." Trans.: B.S. "ring servants" or "ring wraiths?"

Non-player character (NPC): A being or creature interacting in a fantasy role playing game controlled ("run") by the gamemaster, player, or another, not as a character synonymous with a player, but as an entity who has no identity with a human participant. Since the NPC is not identified with anyone, its death or departure will not result in anyone leaving the game or having to generate a new character.

Northmen: Also called Northrons. A grouping of tall, strong, fair, and hairy mannish folk. They are of the "Middle Men," a group culturally and physically closer to Elves than those labeled "common," but nonetheless distinct from the "High Men" or Edain. Branches of the Northmen include: (1) the Wood-men, (2) the Plains-men or *Gramuz*, (3) the Lake-men, (4) the Dale-men, (5) the Éothraim, and (5) the distant Beijabar — all Rhovanion peoples in T.A. 1640. The Rohirrim of the late Third Age are descendants of Rhovanion Northmen. They are the principal human stock in Rhovanion. See Section 5.0 for more detail.

Offensive Bonus (OB): The total addition to the combat roll due to the attacker's advantages — including the attacker's physical prowess, superiority of weapon, expertise, magic items, etc.

Orcs: Originally bred by Morgoth in the First Age, these creatures quickly became servants of Darkness; it is likely that they were not inherently evil, but were culturally and mentally predisposed toward the "foul life." Legend has it that their ancestors were Elves who were twisted in mind and body by the Black Enemy.

Orcs are of two types: the lesser or common orcs which average about four to five feet in height and sport grotesque, fanged faces; and the greater orcs or Uruk-hai, who reach heights of six feet and have more "human" features. All are heavy of build and have long, thin arms and thick hides.

Bred as laborers and warriors, orcs respect little but brute force, and are most potent when serving under a "focused will." They are without exception cannibalistic, bloodthirsty and cruel, and care little for social organization. Generally, smaller tribal/clanal units are the norm, based on a strong leader; each employs its own dialect. Most are stellar smiths. Their ability to work with metal is hardly paralleled. Although the appearance of their items is often poor, the performance is excellent. They rarely make items unassociated with fighting, however.

Lesser orcs are born, live, fight, and die in darkness; they abhor light and are blinded by the unshielded sun. Greater orcs are most carefully bred and can operate in daylight. Their abilities to speak, organize, reason, and fight are higher than their brethren. Some claim the Uruk-hai are products of Saruman's White Hand, and were first spawned from orcs and men. It appears, however, that they first arose in Mordor, and that their lineage has nothing to do with the Secondborn. While the lesser orcs favor curved scimitars and wicked axes, the Uruks bear straight swords and a wider variety of superior arms.

Orientation Roll: A *roll* representing a combatant's degree of control following unusual action or surprise.

The One Ring: Also called the Ruling Ring or simply the Ring. Forged by Sauron in the depths of the Orodruin (Mt. Doom), the One Ring was the greatest of the "Rings of Power." Sauron intended it to be a means of controlling the holders of all the other great rings forged before it, thereby enabling the Dark Lord to hold sway over the elves, dwarves, and men. Much of Sauron's own "strength" went into its making, and he could never be truly whole without it. When the Ring was taken from him by Isildur at the end of the Second Age he was never able to reclaim it. Upon reforming around T.A. 1050, Sauron concluded that the Ring was lost, probably after flowing into the Belegaer (Sea) when Isildur "dropped" it in the waters of the Anduin at the Gladden Fields. The Ring had a sense of its own and sought power, particularly that of its maker. Sauron believed it would inevitably surface somewhere in western Endor. He went about the business of conquering the continent, but always kept his eye out for the return of the Ring. His agents and troops always informed him of occurences which might lead him to it. The search become more active when he was aware that it was no longer truly lost. Although it appeared as a plain old band (its inscription could only be read when the ring was heated), the One Ring was actually the most powerful item forged in Endor since the construction of the Iron Crown. It was purely evil and acted to magnify the holder's desires and obsessions to such a degree that, regardless of intent, a perverse evil result would eventually occur. The Ring embodied much of the substance of Sauron's greatest works (e.g. Barad-dur). With the Ring's destruction in T.A. 3019, Sauron was forever crippled; his spirit could no longer assume physical form as we know it and he was "banished" from Middle-earth.

Palantir: Seven spheres of "seeing" located at strategic sites in Arnor and Gondor, the two kingdoms of the Dunedain, during the late Second Age. Originally made by the Noldor and placed in Numenor, they were later brought to Middle-earth by Elendil and the "Faithful." The main palantir was placed in the Dome of Stars in Gondor's capital: Osgiliath. Among the others, at least one possessed "a greater power" than the norm; it was located in Arnor within the great Tower of Amon Sul (on Weathertop). This latter sphere, together with another from Annuminas (the old capital of Arnor), was lost in the shipwreck of Arvedui in the middle of the Third Age. The other "Northern Stone" was located in the Tower Hills; the "Southern Stones" were placed at Osgiliath, Orthanc, Minas Anor (renamed Minas Tirith), and Minas Ithil (renamed Minas Morgul). The spheres varied in size and coloration. Each enabled the user, to varying degrees, to view far away places and communicate with other willing users of the Stones. Also called "Stones." Plural: palantiri. Trans.: Q. "far seer."

Parry: The use of some or all of a combatant's offensive bonus to increase his defensive points.

Player character (PC): A character or being controlled by and identified with one of the players. In the game context, the player character (PC) *IS* the player and vice versa.

Power Points: The number used to show how much spell casting power a spell user has access to in a given period (usually one day or the period between two stretches of fully restful sleep or meditation). Power points are expended when a spell is cast. They are exhausted (until the next period begins) when the points expended (as a result of the spells cast during the period) reaches the number equivalent to the user's total power points. Power points are synonymous with "spell points."

Profession: Also called "character class." A profession is actually a grouping of individuals who had a common set of interests in their early/formative years. Example: Magicians have a profession based on their emphasis on the study of spells, particularly during their childhood and formative years.

Resistance Roll (RR): A dice roll which determines whether or not a character/creature or object successively resists being affected by a spell. The result of unsuccessful rolls will be based on the spell's effect; successful rolls may mean the spell has no effect or reduced effectiveness. Resistance roll is synonymous with "saving throw" or "saving roll."

Rhovanion: Also called *Wilderland.* Traditionally, this region includes all the land south of the Ered Mithrin and north of Mordor between the Misty Mountains and the Carnen. The principality of the same name, however, was that region ruled by the Northman king Vidugavia during the 14th century T.A.; this area was that east of Mirkwood and west of the Celduin. Some confused reports have shown the Celduin has the eastern border of the larger geographical expanse. This area includes Mirkwood, and the term is used in this module in its larger context.

Roll: Normally a percentile *roll* giving random results from 01 to 00 (100).

NOTE: ***In certain circumstances, this roll must be adjusted through the use of an open-ended system, yielding results above 100 or below 01.***

DICE ROLLING CONVENTIONS:

D10 Roll a 20-sided die to generate a number between 1 and 10 ("0" is read as 10)

D100 Roll 2 twenty-sided dice simultaneously, they should be of different colors with one determining the 10's digit, the other the 1's. Since "00" is read as 100, results thus generated are from 01-100

NOTE: Most rolls of D100 in the Rolemaster System are "open-ended." If a roll is open-ended:

A roll of over 95 calls for a second roll of D100 to be made and added to the first to determine the total die roll. If over 95 is rolled on the second roll as well, the first two results are added to yet a third roll of 100. Theoretically this process could go on forever.

A roll of under 06 requires that a second roll be made and subtracted from the first (likely yielding a negative result). If this second die roll is over 95 it is subtracted from the first and a third die roll is made and subtracted from this total (likely yielding a result of less than − 100). This process could also theoretically go on forever.

Rolls that are **not** open-ended specifically include:

- Stat generation rolls
- Stat potential generation rolls
- Stat gain rolls
- Spell gain rolls

Sagath: An Easterling tribe from the eastern shores of the Sea of Rhùn. They are precursers of the great migrations that begin with the "Wainrider" invasion of T.A. 1851. The Sagath are part of the group called by the Wood-elves "Talathoth" (S. "Plains Host"), and are culturally linked to both the Wainriders and the Balchoth folk who were so prominent later in the Third Age. Most are deeply-tanned and have straight black hair and brown eyes. A semi-nomadic common folk, they are excellent horsemen and herders. Their family groups employ great carts and wagons (the latter called "Wains") to move their belongings. Sagath horses are generally small and swift. Unlike their brethren, however, the Sagath do not use war-chariots.

Sauron: The Dark Lord, the Shadow, the Lord of the Rings. A 'lesser Vala' who served Morgoth in the First Age, Sauron survived and went south from the elder lands of darkness. During the Second Age he convinced the Noldor of Eregion to create rings for the Free Peoples; later, in secret, he forged the One Ring. This ring embodied much of his power and was capable of uniting and controlling the other Rings of Power - the Three Rings of the elves, the Seven of the dwarven lords, and the Nine Rings of mankind. Both the dwarves and elves resisted his trap; the former took off their rings, while the latter race entrusted theirs to three of the Wise. Men, however, were not so quick to realize the danger, and the Nine rings remained in the hands of nine proud lords who sought power and found undying darkness - they became the Nazgûl. Sauron removed himself to the fortress land of Mordor in the Second Age and there built Barad-dur. Mount Doom (Orodruin) was already used as his personal forge, and within the new realm he began to cast a new Shadow upon the continent. Sauron was overthrown twice in the Second Age, first by the Numenoreans under Ar-Pharazon, and later by the Last Alliance of Men and Elves. Each time, however, he returned to power. His "body," however, was destroyed in the Downfall of Numenor (from which he escaped), and he was never again able to assume fair form. The lidless eye (normally red upon black) was his symbol. He was responsible for creating two superior variants of creatures spawned by Morgoth — (1) the Uruk-hai, or great orcs, and (2) the Olog-hai, or black trolls. Both were formidable fighting forces.

Second Age (S.A.): The second recorded Age of Middle-earth. It began after the fall of Morgoth, with the founding of the Grey Havens and Lindon. The age ended in S.A. 3441, when Elendil and Gil-galad overthrew Sauron, Isildur took the One Ring, and the Dark Lord and Nazgûl passed into the shadows. S.A. is used denoting dates.

Skill: An aspect of a character which enables him/her to perform an action more effectively. The term is used here to refer to abilities which are particularly applicable to FRP campaigns and adventuring.

Stat (Characteristic): One of the physical and mental attributes which are considered most important to an adventurer in a FRP game. Stats dictate how well a character develops, moves, fights, takes damage, absorbs information etc. They are used to compute bonuses and subtractions to die rolls.

Third Age (T.A.): The third recorded Age of Middle-earth. It began following the defeat of Sauron as a result of the Last Alliance of Men and Elves and ended in T.A. 3021, when the Keepers of the Ring passed over the sea (from the Grey Havens). T.A. is the abbreviation.

Trolls: Made in mockery of Ents, Trolls are tough as the stone of which they are made. They are huge (usually about 10') and immensely strong, but are stupid and slow-moving. Their kind hate all other creatures, a legacy of Morgoth's dark touch. Normal trolls are divided into several types (based on their location): hill, snow, and stone trolls. The latter is the most common group. These types all revert to the stone of their substance when exposed to the light of day. Another group, Sauron's *Olog-hai,* despise but can withstand sunlight. These "Black Trolls" are quicker than their brethren, and possess an intellect which enables them to act in leadership positions. They are most terrifying. The Elven name for troll is "Torog" (pl. "Tereg").

Urulóki: (Q. "Fire-serpent") The oldest of the races of Dragons active in Middle-earth's affairs. They were bred by Morgoth from the original Dragon stock, and were used in the War of the Great Jewels. The earliest of these beasts could not fly, but improvements in breeding eventually produced drakes such as Ancalagon the Black. Smaug is one of the Urulóki. Note that some historians do not place flying Dragons in this class, but this distinction appears erroneous. Only Cold-drakes and lesser Dragons fall outside this category.

Valar: Refers to primary Valar..fifteen (including Morgoth), and later fourteen servants of Eru. Lesser "gods," demi-gods, entities consisting of pure spirit but often taking physical shape. Many of the peoples/beings in Middle-earth worship them or hold them sacred. Guardians of the world, it is they who sent the Wizards (Istari) to Middle-earth.

The West: Northwestern Middle-earth, specifically the area within which the events described in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* took place. Loosely, the area from Umbar northward and west of the eastern shores of the Sea of Rhun.

1.2 MIDDLE-EARTH CAMPAIGNS: CREATIVE FOUNDATIONS

Since each module in this series strives for flexibility, the GM is given settings which allow for a variety of campaigns. Naturally, no one game, game system, or GM's approach is exactly alike. Some portions of this module will be better suited to certain campaigns, while others may not come into play until the adventurers have considerably progressed in skill. It is, therefore, important that the GM focus upon the sections of the module which are geared to his/her campaign.

The maps, cultural notes, sections and general descriptive text relate to the area as a whole, and have bearing on the political and economic structures - regardless of the time chosen for the game. These aids are intended for use with any campaign; they provide the "common denominators" of the region, and act as the ultimate creative foundations. A GM who wishes to create all or most of his layouts and adventures from scratch will still find these sections extremely useful. Regardless of the details and day-to-day activities associated with the area, these fundamental factors have a bearing. After all, land forms and cultural norms change relatively slowly.

The individual layouts and descriptions of personalities are provided to give the GM an idea of the power structure at a specific point in Middle-earth's history. Interaction based on these sections will depend on one's campaign. Dominant political figures and their holds will provide adventurers with certain death in many cases. Only the very accomplished and/or strong group of player characters will be geared for such an experience. Most adventuring parties should best be run in the context of lesser power; therefore, more modest personalities and layouts have been provided - enabling the GM to get a creative start should he/she wish to employ already-detailed structures. Of course, all of the layouts and figures found in this module can be considered as flavorful examples associated with, or common to, the area. As noted above, these modules describe whole regions, and we encourage the GM to create his own detailed version of the given section of Endor.

1.3 ADAPTING THIS MODULE TO YOUR FANTASY ROLE PLAYING CAMPAIGN

COMMENTARY

This module is designed for use with most major fantasy role playing systems. Since the various FRP rules have their own particular approaches to combat, spells, and character generation and development, certain common descriptive terms have been selected for the individual outlines of places, people, creatures, and things. Unfortunately, statistical data such as bonuses and character "stats" differ widely between systems; after all, they are keyed to specific game mechanics. ICE has chosen to use percentile (D100) terms as a base, since conversion to D20, D18, and D10 can be achieved with relative ease (note Sec. 1.321 below for a handy conversion

chart). Player character and NPC characteristics/stats are also detailed in one particular manner; again, simplicity and consistency have been emphasized, and conversion to your game system should be relatively painless.

This section deals with (1) tips for using this module with respect to starting a campaign and (2) guidelines for fitting the given data into terms appropriate for the game system you are using. Keep in mind that fantasy role playing is by nature a creative experience, and the individual GM or player should feel free to incorporate his/her own ideas into their game.

1.31 APPROACH FOR INTEGRATING THIS MODULE INTO YOUR CAMPAIGN

The sections specifically oriented toward the GM use the terminology found in the region (e.g. "Ered Mithrin" instead of "Grey Mountains"). This, we hope, will help the GM become more immersed in the culture of ***Northern Mirkwood***, and will enable him/her to better aid the PCs. The "open sections" employ the English translations.

The following steps may be helpful when beginning to employ the region here described:

(1) Read the entire module to get a flavorful idea of the region;

(2) Reread the sections devoted to notes for the gamemaster, and converting statistics for your game system;

(3) Choose the time setting for your campaign. Should you choose to run a game at the beginning or end of the Third Age, or early in the Fourth Age, pay particular attention to the section devoted to this region "at other times." In fact, this section will give the GM an idea of the considerations involved with setting a campaign at any date other than that chosen here. ICE chose the mid Third Age as a particularly exciting era, but you may enjoy another time even more;

(4) Assemble any source materials (note suggested reading) you find necessary;

(5) Research the period you have chosen and compose any outlines you need in addition to the material provided here;

(6) Convert the NPC, trap, weapon, spell, and item statistics to terms suitable to your game. Note changes in the system you are using which must be made in order to keep your campaign in line with the flow of life in Middle Earth;

(7) Create a total setting, using lots of maps to detail patterns and provide a creative framework. In this way you will have a rich and consistent world, and the foundation data will give you the flexibility to detail random areas and events.

1.32 GUIDELINES FOR USING YOUR FRP RULES SYSTEM WITH THIS MODULE: CONVERSION NOTES

When using this module with your FRP campaign, be careful to note all the non-player character statistics before beginning play. Should any adjustments need to be made, you may wish to consider the following guidelines. The material provided is in terms of percentages and is intended to give the reader a relatively clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the individuals and creatures discussed. Most FRP systems will relate to the data, and conversion should be simple; remember, however, that there are dozens of role playing rules and the change-over from the statistics given here may be troublesome; you may wish to design your own NPCs using this module as no more than a framework.

> Note: *As a general rule, all bonuses include advantages or disadvantages which normally operate in activities involving the given character. Offensive bonuses include stats, enhanced primary weapons, constantly or near-constantly operating spells, skill levels or expertise, etc. Similarly, defensive bonuses incorporate the effects of shields, stats, special items, skill, normally activated spells, etc. Spells of limited duration or access, secondary weapons, and other factors involved in a given situation may act to modify these bonuses. The character's description will act to give the reader a breakdown of the specific components making up the bonuses. Bonuses preceding weapons or shields are modifications to the inherent strengths of the given item (e.g. a +10 Shield would subtract 30 from an opponent's attack, for the shield would normally add +20 to the holder's DB, and the bonus adds another +10).*

1.321 Converting/Determining Stats. Ten stats are used to describe each character detailed in the module. Should you use a character development system with different characteristics and/or an alternative number of stats, simply follow these steps:

1) Assign the appropriate stat from your FRP system to the value given beside the analogous characteristic listed in the module. If your rules use fewer stats, you may wish to average the values for those combinations of factors which contribute to a characteristic found in your system (e.g. dexterity = an average of quickness + agility). Should your guidelines utilize more stats to describe part of a character, you may wish to use the value provided for more than one "corresponding" characteristic (e.g. you might use the value assigned to constitution for both endurance and durability). The following is a chart listing some examples of equivalent stat terms:

STRENGTH: *power, might, force, stamina, endurance, conditioning, physique, etc.* Note that the vast majority of systems include strength as an attribute.

AGILITY: *dexterity, deftness, manual skill, adroitness, maneuverability, stealth, dodging ability, litheness, etc.*

QUICKNESS: *dexterity, speed, reaction ability, readiness, etc.*

CONSTITUTION: *health, stamina, endurance, physical resistance, physique, damage resistance, etc.*

SELF DISCIPLINE: *will, alignment, faith, mental strength or power, concentration, self control, determination, zeal, etc.*

EMPATHY: *emotional capacity, judgement, alignment, wisdom, mana, magical prowess, bardic voice, etc.*

REASONING: *intelligence, learning ability, study ability, analysis rating, mental quickness, logic, deductive capacity, wit, judgement, I.Q., etc.*

MEMORY: *intelligence, wisdom, information capacity, mental capacity, recall, retention, recognition, etc.*

INTUITION: *wisdom, luck, talent, reactive ability (mental), guessing ability, psychic ability, insight, clairvoyance, inspiration, perception, pre-sentiment, etc.*

PRESENCE: *appearance, level-headedness, panic resistance, morale, psychic ability, self control, vanity, perceived power, mental discipline, bardic voice, charisma, etc.*

2) Convert the statistical value of the assigned characteristics to numbers appropriate for your game. If your FRP system uses percentage values, no change should be necessary. If not, use the conversion table below.

TABLE 1.321 STAT BONUSES AND CONVERSION

Unusual Personal characteristics such as a high Agility or Strength seriously affect the capabilities of a character. The following table gives a series of "stat." ranges on the 1-100 scale and the bonus (or penalty) accruing to actions heavily influenced by that statistic.

Columns are provided for 3-18 and 2-12 statistics for comparison and/or conversion if other portions of the game system mandate use of non-percentile "stats."

1-100 Stat.	Bonus on D100*	Bonus on D20	3-18 Stat.	2-12 Stat.
102+	+35	+7	20+	17+
101	+30	+6	19	15-16
100	+25	+5	18	13-14
98-99	+20	+4	17	12
95-97	+15	+3	16	
90-94	+10	+2	15	11
85-89	+5	+1	14	10
75-84	+5	+1	13	9
60-74	0	0	12	8
40-59	0	0	10-11	7
25-39	0	0	9	6
15-24	−5	−1	8	5
10-14	−5	−1	7	4
5-9	−10	−2	6	3
3-4	−15	−3	5	
2	−20	−4	4	2
1	−25	−4	4	2

* This bonus will vary with race if appropriate.

1.322 Converting/Determining Combat Ability With Arms. All combat values are based on ***Arms Law/Claw Law.*** The following guidelines will also aid conversion.

1) ***Strength and quickness bonuses*** *have been determined according to Table 1.321 above. Note the stats you are using and compute these bonuses using the rules under your system;*
2) ***Combat adds based on level*** *included here are: +3/level for fighters and rogues, +2/level for thieves and warrior monks, and +1/level for bards, monks and rangers. Simply take the level of the NPC, note his character class (or equivalent under your system), and compute any offensive bonus (due to level) appropriate for your game. Note that the bonuses other than those mentioned under armor type are "offensive" adds.*
3) *If your system is based on* ***Skill Levels*** *(or other skill increments), use the offensive bonus as given. You may have to convert the add to a non-percentile value. Alternatively, you may wish to note Section 1.325 below.*
4) ***Armor Types*** *given are based on the following breakdown:*

Armor type	Covering Description
1	*Skin (or light/normal clothing)*
2	*Robes*
3	*Light Hide (as part of body, not armor)*
4	*Heavy Hide (as part of body, not armor)*
5	*Leather Jerkin (pliable leather)*
6	*Leather Coat*
7	*Reinforced Leather Coat*
8	*Reinforced Full-Length Leather Coat*
9	*Leather Breastplate*
10	*Leather Breastplate and Greaves*
11	*Half-Hide Plate (as part of body, not armor)*
12	*Full-Hide Plate (as part of body, not armor)*
13	*Chain Shirt*
14	*Chain Shirt and Greaves*
15	*Full Chain*
16	*Chain Hauberk*
17	*Metal Breastplate*
18	*Metal Breastplate and Greaves*
19	*Half Plate*
20	*Full Plate*

Simply look at the armor description and substitute the appropriate armor type/class from your FRP system;

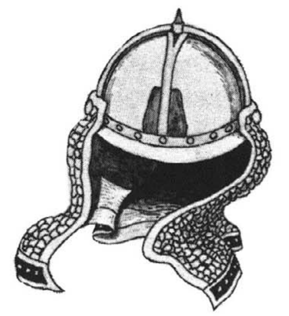
5) ***Defensive bonuses*** *are based on the NPC's quickness bonus as computed on Table 1.321 above. Where the defensive bonus is in parentheses, the value also includes the added capability of a shield (an extra 20 for non-magic normal shields, plus any value for magical enhancement). In such a case, simply note that there is or is not a shield, and if there is, what type.*

1.323 Converting/Determining Spells and Spell Lists. Spell references provided here are in the form of "lists," groupings of related spells. Each list has a common theme and normally will have a different but related spell at each level. For instance, knowledge of "Fire Law" to tenth level would result in the acquisition of 10 similar fire-based spells, one of each level from one to ten. Whether the spell user could effectively cast these spells would be up to the GM, the system, and the caster's level or degree of skill. FRP systems using rules which provide for the learning and development of spells through "colleges" or along specialized lines employ concepts similar to those used in this module. Many systems, however, dictate that player characters or NPCs undertake to learn but one spell at a time, often with no requirement that its subject matter/effect relate to a particular background or pattern. Converting the NPC spell lists to individual spell counterparts will be more difficult, but can be achieved with relative ease using the following guidelines:

1) *Look at the NPC's spell lists and note the various names for the groupings. Each name will indicate what type of spell specialization the NPC has followed (e.g. the "Fire Law" list indicates a preference for fire-oriented spells);*
2) *Note the NPC's level and determine the number of spells or spell groupings he/she would have under your game system. Also consider the level of power of accessible spells the NPC would have (e.g. a 5th level magician under your rules might have a maximum of 8 spells - two 3rd level spells, three 2nd level spells, and three 1st level spells).*
3) *Select spells from your system appropriate for a spell user of the NPC's level and profession, keeping in mind that the preferences indicated in the module should be followed where possible.*

1.324 A Note on Levels. When using certain "level-systems," a GM may find that the levels provided make characters too powerful for his world system. If this is the case, multiple the levels given by .75 or .6 depending upon your situation. This would reduce a 20th level character to a 15th level or 12th level character respectively. Remember to reduce appropriate bonuses accordingly.

1.325 General Skill Bonuses. General skill bonuses can be obtained by taking the level of the character and calculating the appropriate bonus under the system being used. An NPC's add, as noted above, will be based on a compilation of level, his weapon and/or other items, the relevant stats, and skill levels. The normal bonus derived from skill development has been computed as follows: *(a) where the skill level is zero the bonus is −25, a reflection of basic unfamiliarity; (b) a bonus of +5 is awarded for skill level one (a +30 jump); (c) for each skill level between one and ten an additional +5 bonus is applied (e.g. skill level seven yields +35); (d) for skill levels eleven through twenty the additional bonus is +2 (e.g. skill level nineteen yields +68); (3) for skill levels twenty-one through thirty an additional bonus of +1 per level is awarded (e.g. skill level twenty eight yields +78); and (f) a bonus of +½ is given for each skill level above thirtieth level.*



1.326 Locks and Traps

The locks and traps found in this module are described in terms of difficulty to unlock or disarm. Subtractions are from the rolls representing a person's attempt to find or overcome these devices. The difficulty factor may represent a specific column on an action/maneuver chart (e.g. ***Rolemaster*** or an additional subtraction or modification to the attempt roll. In any case, the terms are descriptive and will help the GM determine whether the trap is of above average difficulty, and how much. The descriptive term is a relative constant based on the following order of modification: Routine (+30), Easy (+20), Light (+10), Medium (0), Hard (−10), Very Hard (−20), Extremely Hard (−30), Sheer Folly (−50), Absurd (−70). Poor lighting, one's physical condition, nearby activity, etc. may affect the lock/trap modification number, but not the difficulty category. Thus, a trap might read "very hard (−50)," indicating it is normally a "−20" construct, but other factors (e.g. dark) make it harder to disarm. These additional problems are easier to overcome than the intrinsic complexity of the mechanism; this explains why it differs from a well-lit pit which reads "sheer folly (−50)" to disarm. The "−50" associated with the "very hard" trap can, with thought, easily be reduced to "−20," but no more advantage is normally attainable, short of disassembling the mechanism. We suggest that a modified (D100) roll exceeding 100 results in success; skills, stats, etc. should be applied versus the difficulty subtraction and the roll to yield a result.

> **Example:** *Wonir the thief encounters a supposed trap in the passage wall. The GM tells him that the mechanism appears to be "hard" to disarm, and that the darkness in the passage will make it even more difficult; the module states "hard (−40)." As stated above, the normal modification for a "hard" category mechanism is −10, so the GM knows that the additional −30 is due to factors other than the trap itself. Often the descriptive passage will show what the other problems are (e.g. lighting), but in any case the GM will be able to note some external factor(s) and will allow the acting character to reduce the difficulty modification to the usual addition/subtraction by acting correctly to overcome the outside obstacle. In this case, a lit torch will eliminate the −30 modifier for lighting, reducing the trap to a −10, the norm for a "hard" trap. Should the trap read "extremely hard (−30)," the GM would note that the −30 is the intrinsic modifier for a trap of that category, and that lighting etc. play no part in the figure; the trap would have to be disarmed accordingly. The terms used here, in order of difficulty: Routine, Easy, Light, Medium, Hard, Very Hard, Extremely Hard, Sheer Folly, and Absurd.*

SUGGESTED SPELL LISTS USED IN *NORTHERN MIRKWOOD*

ESSENCE

GENERAL

Spell Wall: RR enhancement
Essence Perceptions: listen; watch
Rune Mastery
Essence Hand: telekinesis
Unbaring Ways: magic lock; undoor
Physical Enhancement: balance; resistance
Lesser Illusions
Detecting Ways
Elemental Shields: light/heat/cold protection
Delving Ways: text/elemental analysis
Invisible Ways
Living Change: shrink; enlarge; change
Spirit Mastery: charm; sleep; words of command
Spell Reins: storing; bending; delaying
Lofty Bridge: leaping; leaving; long Door; teleport
Spell Enhancement: range; duration
Dispelling Ways
Shield Mastery: shield; bladeturn; deflect
Rapid Ways: run; haste; speed
Gate Mastery: animal and demon summoning

MAGICIAN BASE

Fire Law
Ice Law
Earth Law
Light Law
Wind Law
Water Law

ILLUSIONIST BASE

Illusion Mastery
Mind Sense Molding
Guises
Sound Molding
Light Molding
Feel-Taste-Smell

ALCHEMIST BASE

Enchanting Ways: bonuses to weapons and armor
Essence Embedding: spells in items
Ment./Chan. Embedding: same for other realms
Organic Skills
Liquid/Gas Skills
Inorganic Skills

MONK BASE

Monk's Bridge: flip; wall and ceiling running
Evasions: swing; dodge; haste
Body Reins: strength; unpain; concentration
Monk's Sense: vision; detection
Body Renewal: minor repairs

EVIL MAGICIAN

Physical Erosion: pains
Matter Disruption: earth to dust; shatter
Dark Contacts: with demons
Dark Summons: demons
Darkness: dark of all kinds

SORCERER BASE

Soul Destruction: possession; absolution
Mind Destruction: Jolts; pain; Mind Break
Flesh Destruction: limbs; organs; body
Soul Destruction
Gas Destruction

MENTALISM

GENERAL

Delving: detect; past vision
Cloaking: blur; invisibility; displacement
Damage Resistance: vs. heat; cold; stun; hits
Anticipations: intuitions; dreams
Attack Avoidance: shield; deflections; bladeturn
Brilliance: light; aura; shockbolt; sunfires
Self Healing: (minor repairs)
Detections
Illusions (minor)
Spell Resistance: enhanced RRs
Sense Mastery: water/fog/dark vision; ment. eye and ear
Gas Manipulation: fogs...to cloudmastery
Shifting: balance; changing; form master
Liquid Manipulation: boil water...to calm seas
Speed: run; speed; haste
Mind Mastery: presence; mental defenses
Solid Manipulation: warm stone...to transmutation
Telekinesis
Mind's Door: leaving; long door; mind's door
Movement: leaping; fly; passing

MENTALIST BASE

Presence: mind store; mind typing; finding
Mind Merge: mind scan; probes; thought stealing
Mind Control: question; hold; coma; mind master
Sense Control: numbing; nerve stun; controls
Mind Attack: jolts; pain; mindshouts
Mind Speech: to groups and far away

SEER BASE

Past Visions
Mind Visions: questions; truth; scans
True Perception
Future Visions
Sense Through Others
True Sight: through wood/stone/distance

LAY HEALER BASE

Muscle Mastery
Concussion Mastery
Bone Mastery
Blood Mastery
Prosthetics
Nerve and Organ Mastery

BARD BASE

Lore
Controlling Songs
Sound Control
Sound Projection
Item Lore

EVIL MENTALIST BASE

Mind Erosion: destroy stats
Mind Subversion: psychoses
Mind Death: forget; lost experience
Mind Disease: mental disorders; phobias
Mind Domination: possession; subjugation

MYSTIC BASE

Confusing Ways
Hiding
Mystical Change
Liquid Alteration
Solid Alteration
Gas Alteration

CHANNELING

GENERAL

Spell Defense: RR enhancement
Barrier Law: air/water/wood/stone walls
Detection Mastery
Lofty Movements: limb/stone walking; merging
Weather Ways: prediction; weather control
Sound's Way: silence; quiet; soundwall
Light's Way: light; aura; shock/lightning bolts
Purifications: disease and poison cures
Concussion's Way: hit point healing
Nature's Law: herb lore; animal mastery
Blood Law
Bone Law
Organ Law
Muscle Law
Nerve Law
Locating Ways: finding; directions
Calm Spirits
Creations: food/water creation; plant growth
Symbolic Ways: imbedding of symbols
Lore: light/dark/curse/poison lore

CLERIC BASE

Channels: raw power; absolution
Summons: of animals and demons
Communal Ways: dreams; intuitions; communing
Life Mastery: lifekeeping; lifegiving (raise dead)
Protections: RR; AT and elemental protections
Repulsions: of undead; channels; curses

HEALER BASE (most powerful healing lists)

Surface Ways: concussion healing
Bone Ways
Muscle Ways
Organ Ways
Blood Ways
Transferring Ways: wounds from target to healer; who can only heal wounds from his own body.

ANIMIST BASE

Nature's Movement: limb/stone/air walking
Plant Mastery
Animal Mastery
Herb Mastery
Nature's Lore
Nature's Protection: facades; organic deflections

RANGER BASE

Path Mastery
Moving Ways
Nature's Guises
Inner Walls: heat/cold protections; RR mod.
Nature's Way: weather prediction; locations

EVIL CLERIC BASE

Disease
Dark Channels: evil fatal channelings
Dark Lore
Curses
Necromancy

ASTROLOGER BASE

Time's Bridge: seeing into the past/future
Way of the Voice: mind speech; controlling others
Holy Vision: dreams; communing
Far Voice: mental speech far away
Starlights: light; aura; starfires
Starsense: presence; finding

1.4 SPECIAL NOTES CONCERNING MAPS AND INTERPRETATION

A variety of maps and layouts have been provided in order to give the GM a creative framework within which to work. Remember that the accuracy of a graphic representation will depend somewhat on the scale used: the smaller the area covered, the closer the area is to its real-life size, the more accurate the illustration. If the scale is 1 inch = 20 miles (as it is on the color area map) the accuracy factor is greater than a map with a scale of say 1 inch = 200 miles. The following notes are helpful for approaching the maps and graphic layouts found in this module.

1.41 GAMEMASTER'S REFERENCE MAP

The color map is a relatively detailed work and is intended for use by the GM and those characters who have virtually somplete knowledge of the region. The major sites and settlements are accurate for the period T.A. 1000—F.A. 1. Dale is in ruin from T.A. 2770 to 2941. The ruin symbols cover the remains of principal sites from prior times. A place's character, however, will vary throughout the Third Age. For instance, Esgaroth is in the same place in both T.A. 1640 and 2941; but during the latter period, it was unlike that shown on the color diagram— being rectangular, smaller, and having but one central harbor.

The color map is the main reference piece, but the GM is also provided with a black and white map detailing the locations of additional places, as well as distribution patterns for peoples, flora, and fauna.

We suggest the GM allow access to the player character map on page 10, but only to the extent that the PCs have actual or inferred knowledge. ICE permits copying of portions of this map (no more) for non-commercial purposes. The GM should cover or obscure labels which would be unknown to the recipient PC.

1.42 BASIC COLOR AREA MAP KEY

(1) The scale is 1 inch = 20 miles;

(2) **Mountains** are represented by the symbol and denote relatively extreme grades which rise at least 2,000 feet above the surrounding "flat" land surface;

(3) **Hills** are denoted by the symbol and represent relatively steep grades which rise at least 200 feet above the surrounding land surface. Usually the surface area immediately adjoining these rises is rugged;

(4) **Mixed forests** are shown using the symbol and are comprised of a variable grouping of deciduous and coniferous trees and associated plant species;

(5) **"Pine forests"** are represented by the symbol and are almost exclusively coniferous in nature;

(6) Hedgerows, **brush,** and thickets are illustrated with the symbol ;

(7) **Primary rivers** are represented by the symbol and are navigable;

(8) **Secondary rivers** are represented by the symbol and are non-navigable by vessels with a draft of more than two feet;

(9) **Streams** are represented by the symbol , and are completely non-navigable;

(10) **Intermittent watercourses** are shown using the symbol and are dependent on rainfall etc.;

(11) **Glaciers** and iceflows are represented by the symbol ;

(12) Mountain **snowfields** and snowy regions have no coloring, but may be noticeable by virtue of the contrast with surrounding color;

(13) **Primary roads** are denoted by the symbol ;

(14) **Secondary roads** are denoted by the symbol ;

(15) **Trails/tracks** are shown by the symbol ;

(16) **Bridges** are represented by the symbol ;

(17) **Fords** are shown using the symbol ;

(18) **Cities** are represented by the symbol and their relative size is dependent upon the width of the symbol. The red coloring signifies a non-military settlement site with civilian character;

(19) **Towns** are represented by the red symbol ;

(20) **Manor houses** or "Great Houses" are shown using the red symbol ;

(21) **Citadels** and huge castle complexes are represented by the yellowish symbol ;

(22) **Small castles**/holds/towers/keeps etc. are denoted by the yellowish symbol . Military sites are all given a yellowish color;

(23) **Monasteries** are represented by the symbol ;

(24) **Downs,** cairnfields, and burial caves are shown using the symbol ;

(25) **Caverns** and cave entries are represented by the symbol ;

(26) **Buttes** and **plateaus** are denoted using the symbol ;

(27) **Lakes** are represented by the symbol as are large ponds;

(28) **Dunes** are shown using the symbol ;

(29) Extremely **rough terrain** may be represented by a light shade of brown or grey coloring and encompasses pebbly or rocky surface, breaks, small ridges and hills, etc.;

(30) **Desert** is represented by the symbol ;

(31) **Shoals** are shown using the symbol ;

(32) **Reefs** are represented by the symbol ;

(33) **Ruins** are denoted by the symbol .

(34) **Swamps** are shown using the symbol . All marshlands of significant size fall into this category;

(35) **Jungle** appears as and is so labeled. It differs in coloration from other mixed forests, being shown in a brighter green.

(36) **Dry or periodic lakes** are represented by the blue symbol

Note that the symbols described above are applicable to all the view maps contained within this module, whether color or black and white. The scale of miles, however, may not be applicable. The top of a map is the northern edge, unless otherwise specified.

GAMEMASTER'S REFERENCE MAP KEY

1 – Udrabax
2 – Tuwurdrog
3 – Thyrn Suel
4 – Surgax-Ukog
5 – Celebannon
6 – Amon Thranduil
7 – Tumsarna
8 – Sarn Goriwing
9 – Londaroth
10 – Azanulinbar-dûm
11 – Barak-shathur
12 – Lar-huz
13 – Nan Morsereg
14 – Dieraglir's bandit hold
15 – Dragon hold

Upland hardwood types and Combinations — Oak-Hickory; Oak-Chestnut Elm-Ash; Poplar-Hemlock. Some Birch, Spruce and incursions of Needleleaf Conifers, such as Temperate Pine and Juniper.

Lowland hardwood types — Oak-Maple; Beech-Maple; Willow-Elm.

Upland Conifers — Douglas Fir; Juniper; Temperate Pine. Large incursions of Oak are present.

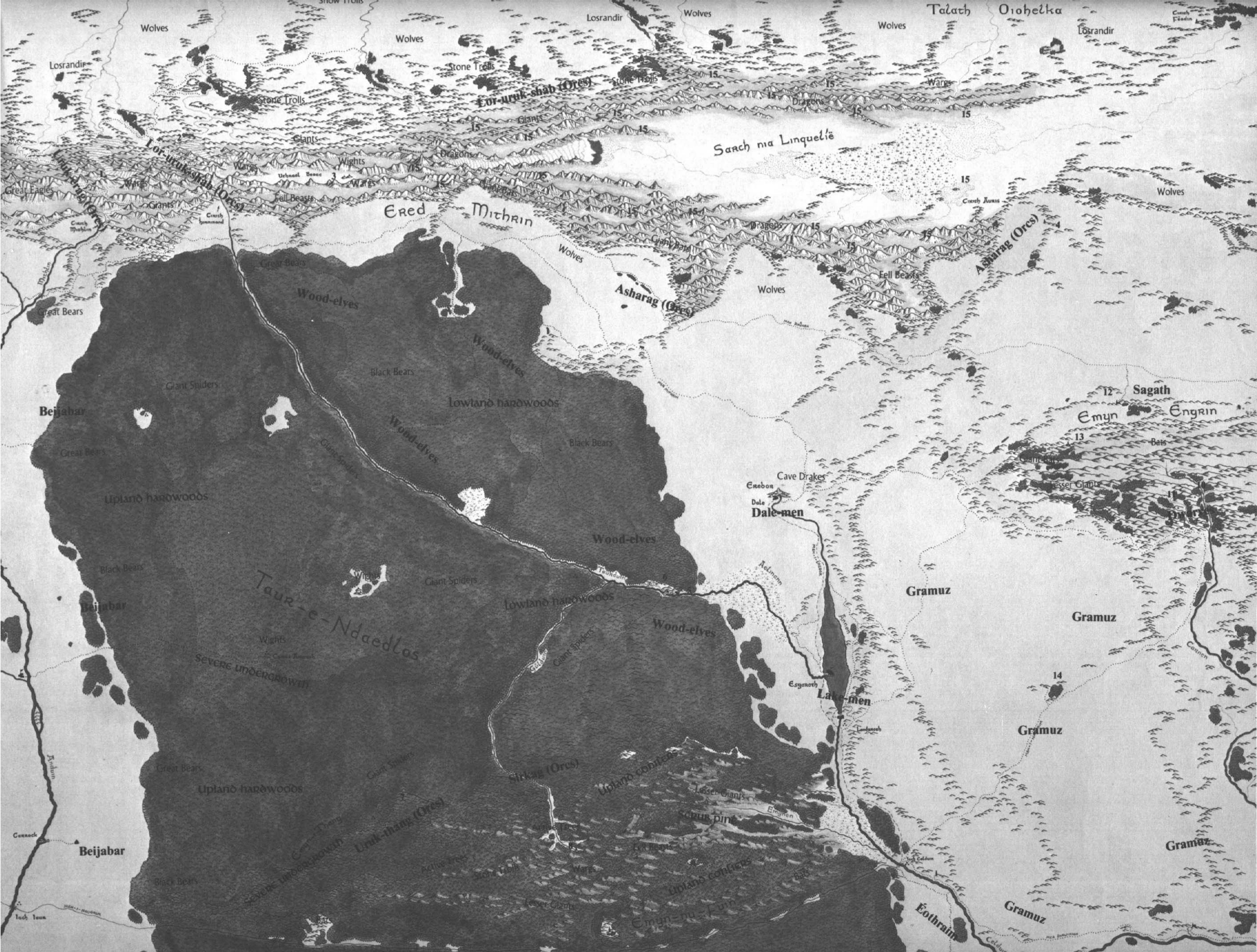
Scrub Pine — 3-20 foot high Spruce and Temperate Pine.

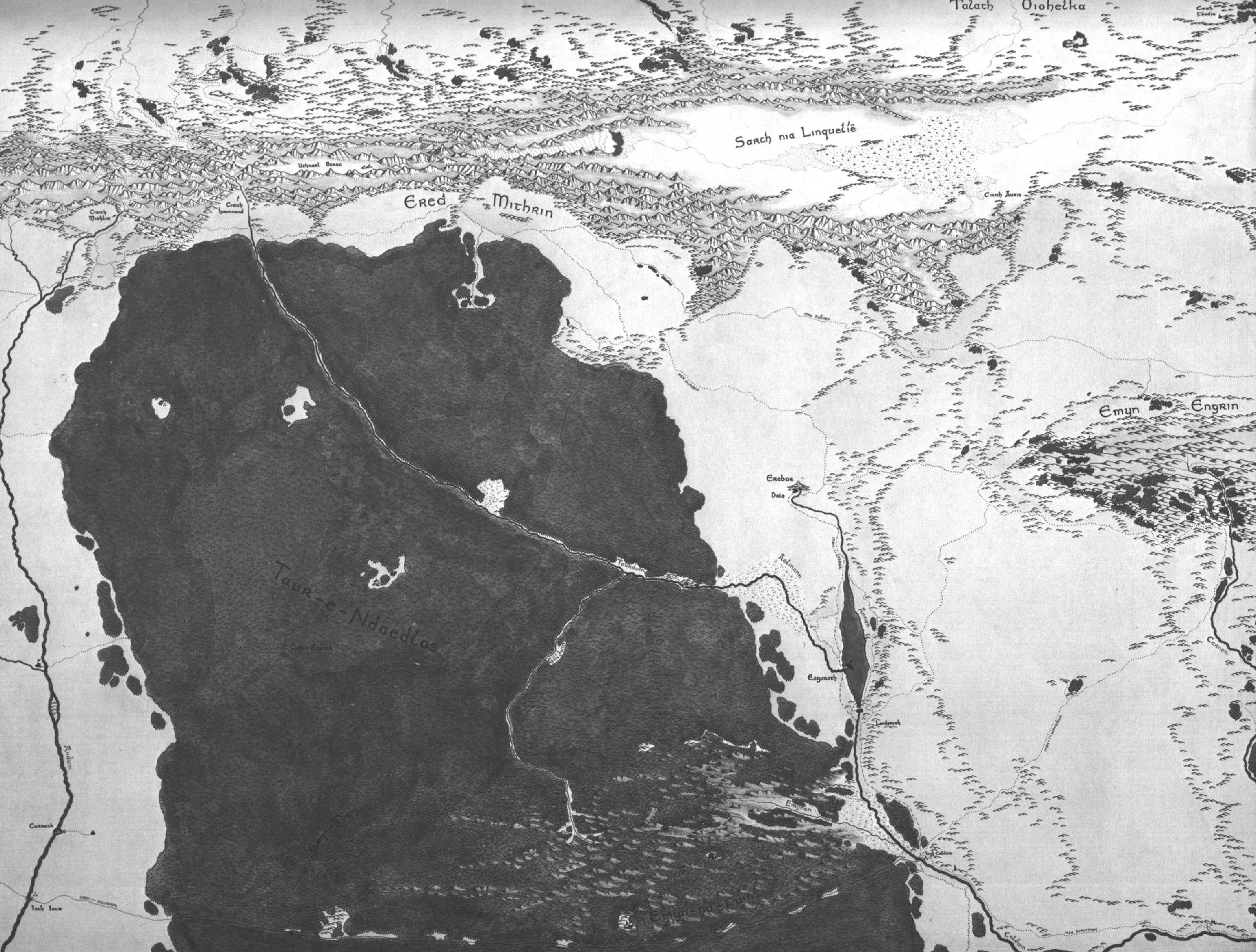
Severe Undergrowth — Unnaturally heavy groundcovering, particularly in dark, dense tree concentrations where undergrowth would not normally thrive. Borders of clearings impassable.

Peoples– **Wood-elves**

Animal groups– Great Eagles

Tree types– **Scrub pine**


Talath Oiohelka
Wolves
Losrandir
Stone Trolls
Lor-uruk-shab (Orcs)
Giants
Dragons
Wargs
Wights
Great Eagles
Fell Beasts
Sarch nia Linquelië
Ered Mithrin
Asharag (Orcs)
Great Bears
Wood-elves
Black Bears
Giant Spiders
Lowland hardwoods
Upland hardwoods
Beijabar
Taur-e-Ndaedelos
Severe undergrowth
Sirkag (Orcs)
Uruk-thang (Orcs)
Upland conifers
Lesser Giants
Scrub pine
Emyn-nu-Fuin
Cave Drakes
Erebor
Dale
Dale-men
Esgaroth
Lake-men
Gramuz
Sagath
Emyn Engrin
Bats
Eothraim
Anduin



Talath Oiohelka
Sarch nia Linquelië
Ered Mithrin
Emyn Engrin
Taur-e-Ndaedelos
Erebor
Dale
Esgaroth
Anduin
Carrock
Celduin
Carnen

1.5 OF THE AREA COVERED IN THIS MODULE

This package focuses primarily on Northern Mirkwood proper, but attention is paid to all of Rhovanion and the western Grey Mountains. The outlying areas are discussed in order to provide an adventurer in or near Mirkwood a good deal of adventuring flexibility. Accordingly, the color map shows the entirety of northern Rhovanion.

The GM should take care to keep the information contained in sections 7.0 and 8.0 relatively confidential. Sections 2,3,4,5,6, and 9 are less oriented toward running a game. Instead, they are intended to give a thorough overview and allow the reader to capture the flavor of the region. It is addressed to the general readership, including player characters. Access to this text, in whole or part, should be given to the PCs (unless they are particularly ignorant).

Statistical data on NPCs and beasts is summarized on the charts in section 8.0.

2.0 INTRODUCTION TO NORTHERN MIRKWOOD (T.A. 1640)

Follow the Old Forest Road through the heart of Mirkwood — take the path of Oromë and the Elves of the First Age — and you'll find yourself in deep, dark woods once full of game and fish and berries. How strangely quiet the woods are now, how dreary and threatening since the Shadow of Mordor cast its pall across the land six hundred years ago. Only the Giant Spiders of the forest seem content as they lie in their shadowy lairs, alert for the slightest stir in their sticky, steely webs.

Home to Thranduil's Wood-Elves, the Dwarves of the Iron Hills, and various Northmen groups of the mountains, (not to mention the Giants and Dragons of the Grey Mountains), Northern Mirkwood is a wide-open wilderland as yet untamed by any dominant civilization. Bordered by the mighty Anduin River to the west and the Grey Mountains to the north, the Northern Mirkwood region includes within its borders the ancient Mountains of Mirkwood and to the east, River Running, the Celduin. The Rhovanion plains, which reach east of the forest, provide the best grazing and farm land in the region and stand as yet unpolluted by Sauron's withering grasp.

Never a center of government or a cultural magnet, Mirkwood in T.A. 1640 is recovering from the recent Dark Plague, a pestilence which struck down half of the men and beasts of the area and led to famine and great suffering in the winter that followed. To add to the region's ills, Smaug the Destroyer and his winged cousins have for centuries made their homes in the frozen wastes north of the Grey Mountains and bred in the Withered Heath of Desolation, a forsaken zone that testifies to the Dragon's powers of ruination. Far to the south, below Rhosgobel and the Narrows of the Forest juts Dol Guldur. For the past six centuries, this gloomy, mist-enshrouded fortress has stood as Sauron's outpost in Mirkwood, his stepping-stone between Mordor and Angmar, and has cast its sickening and strangling shadow across the game and the greenery of what was once Greenwood the Great, Middle-earth's mightiest western forest.

At the eastern edge of the forest in the eaves of Mirkwood live the Wood-Elves — immortal minstrels, multi-linguists, lovers of the good life — who have cast their spells unperturbed for centuries, quite indifferent to the Men, Dwarves and lesser beings around them. To the east a small group of Dwarves mines the Iron Hills, most of Durin's Folk having settled at Moria (Khazad-dûm) in previous centuries to dig up the vast wealth there.

And what of the Northmen — what are they like? Take your pick. Wild men live here — not many, but a few genuine wild men of the woods, men of little learning and culture who live closer to beasts than to other men. (Some seem more bearlike than human.) Other bands of more-sociable Northmen have settled in larger numbers along the vales of the Anduin and on the wide plains of Rhovanion to the east of the forest, to farm and hunt and to a small extent, trade. These men maintain bonds, however loosely, with their kinsmen in Gondor. In the foothills of the Iron Hills and the Grey Mountains live mountain men — fierce Northmen wrapped in skins and furs, hunters and trappers who live most of their lives in the wild lands north of the Forest River, within earshot of the Dragon's roar. Bound to the soil and woods of the region, these proud and independent descendants of the Edain lead a clannish existence, answering to no one but themselves.

All of these bold inhabitants warily await your arrival, so welcome to Northern Mirkwood, Adventurer! May your sword be quick and your senses keen!

3.0 THE LAND: AN OVERVIEW

Dominating Northern Mirkwood are the Grey Mountains and the forest of Mirkwood itself, once called Greenwood the Great, the remains of a vast, largely-coniferous forest that covered much of northern Middle-earth in ancient times. Dense with pine, oak and beech, the forest of Mirkwood is over 400 miles long and 200 miles across at its widest point, where the old Forest Road cuts west to east from the Anduin to the River Running (S."Celduin"). The woods provide shelter to man and beast and stand as a natural barrier to sweeping invasions from the East. The land rolls gently here, in the heart of Mirkwood; the hollows and wide valleys are lined with tall oaks standing almost trunk to trunk.

Not the mightiest of Middle-earth's mountain ranges, the Grey Mountains still stand as jagged-peaked giants, some rising over 6000 feet in elevation. Many are snow-capped in winter. (Temperatures are moderated by thermal slope winds which warm the mountainsides during the daylight hours.) At the eastern edge of the Mountains between two muscled arms lies the Withered Heath, a desolate region long a passion pit for rutting dragons (and good for little else). The lower, older Mountains of Mirkwood — their limestone caverns perfect for hiding booty, or just hiding — reach to the eastern edge of the woods.

To the north and east the Lonely Mountain, appropriately enough, stands alone above the plain before it — haughty, foreboding, aged and silent but for the occasional stirring of a dragon leaving his treasured lair to hunt or simply to run amok through a nearby settlement. The great spur of the Lonely Mountain juts southward as if daring the approaching adventurer journeying upriver to continue his quest.

Three rivers — the Anduin, the Forest and the River Running — bless the region with fresh running water and provide transportation for commerce and adventure. Mightiest of all rivers in Middle-earth, the Anduin flows south for almost 1400 miles from its origins in the mountains of the northern Wilderland. The Anduin also provides natural boundaries between states and discourages frivolous east-west travel.

The Forest River running from the Grey Mountains gathers speed as it races east and feeds into the Long Lake, a small but significant body of fresh water lying beyond the eastern edge of the forest. We know that low hills line the northern shore of the Lake, obscuring from view all but the highest peak of the Lonely Mountain. It takes about two to three days to row up the Lonely Mountain, should you want to visit.

The Forest River (S. "Taurduin") is wide-mouthed at the Lake, with stone cliffs rising on either side and at their feet, coarse waterworn gravel called 'shingles,' partially the result of glacial tilling. The Long Marshes — pools of brackish water with isles of marshy land peeping up — now appear as the main body of water flows on to the Lake. South of the Lake stand waterfalls, heard as "a distant roar" from the promontory of rock that would later be the site of Lake-town, Mirkwood's first community of men.

The River Running, fed from the Lake and thus indirectly from the Forest River, originates with much smoke and steam at the Lonely Mountain and flows south past the eastern eaves of Mirkwood before turning east to join the River Carnen to empty into the Sea of Rhûn. Together, the River Running and the Forest River run for more than 800 miles through the woods and plains of Mirkwood.

Mirkwood possesses one great creek worthy of mention: the enchanted stream of forgetfulness and drowsiness that would so befuddle Bombur later in the Third Age. A black, swift stream some twelve yards wide, it lies in the bowels of the forest, a good four-day hike from the eastern edge of the woods. The Wood-elves call it the "Gulduin".

The climate of Northern Mirkwood promises a warm, pleasant summer and a cold but not Forodwaith-like winter, perfect for outdoorsmen like the Northmen and the hearty if somewhat standoffish Elves and Dwarves who travel and live here. Glaciation seems to have had its effect upon Northern Mirkwood. The rolling "tumbled land" between the Lonely Mountain and the Grey Mountains to the north, the Long Marshes along the Forest River near Long Lake, the existence of Long Lake itself (not much more than a gigantic ditch filled to the brim by the rivers) — all these factors indicate the presence and action of a glacier in the distant past.

South of the Long Lake lie the plains of the Rhovanion, between the eastern border of the forest and the River Running, land which escaped glacial tilling. Here, some Northmen have built permanent, if isolated homesteads and established trade routes with the East.

Minerals abound in the mountains of Northern Mirkwood, the Iron Hills yielding just what you would expect and apparently in abundance, for some dwarves have lived and worked here for centuries. One might guess

that the rich mineral deposits of the region would have included coal, ore and phosphorus but nothing specific is said; and by mid-Third Age much of the wealth is gone. The Iron Hills interestingly enough may once have been an extension of the Grey Mountains which stretch forth almost 600 miles and bar the door to the icy Northern Wastes above. Both chains share a similar appearance, each having a precipitous face looking south, and both align readily, suggesting that the Valars' destruction of the great parent chain was incomplete and simply scattered the hills like links tossed from a broken chain. The core of at least some of the Iron Hills is crystalline rock, probably quartz.

Prevailing westerly winds bring kind temperatures to the area, but of course in the Ered Mithrin (Grey Mountains), the winter is long, snowy and cold. Sudden changes in weather — usually for the worse — are taken for granted in Middle-earth; Northern Mirkwood is no exception.

The predominating land masses of Northern Mirkwood are the mountains of course, but the plains and rivers in the area help to moderate what might be rather harsh effects of the climate east of the Misty Mountains. But for intermittent, furious clashes with the forces of Darkness, and the recent ravaging of the Plague, the region would surely have been settled and 'civilized' much sooner and more completely, for it offers the mineral wealth of the mountains, the commerce and harvest of the rivers and the soil of the plains, were they settled and farmed. There is always the danger of floods, especially at Sauron's instigation, and earthquakes have shaken the region, but all in all Northern Mirkwood provides an escape from the 'over-civilized' west, a buffer to the brutal cold of the North and a safety zone against incursions of evil from the East and South. Unfortunately, a safety zone can become a death trap with alarming rapidity in the Middle-earth of the mid-Third Age.

4.0 OF PLANTS AND ANIMALS

Blessed by a temperate climate, plenty of fresh running water and the protection of the Grey Mountains to the north, the dense woods and grassy plains of Northern Mirkwood normally abound with a great variety of plant and animal life — some of its creatures startling in size and homicidal in desire. (The unwary adventurer may find himself acting as a 'lunch on legs' to the Giant Spiders of the forest.) In the Long Marshes near Long Lake thrive the greatest numbers of species of animal life — insects mostly, unaffected by the recent plague — but birds, amphibians and mammals also depend upon the marshlands for food, drink and shelter (and just a place to unwind after a hard day at the forest). Here, in the slime and muck of the fens, hundreds of species of flora and fauna live and multiply and die unencumbered by greater territorial ambitions.

But in 1640, the Great Plague, while mostly a memory, has left its mark. The forest is a quieter place, the grass is higher, the thickets wilder. Along the Lake, three distinct types of vegetation illustrate the interaction of water and land upon the growth and distribution of plants: the aquatic community of the Lake, the shoreline community of grasses, and the mixed, sub-boreal forest, largely an extension of the cathedral-like woods nearby. This balanced, sound ecosystem, provides rainfall, normal temperatures and possesses the stamina to continue flourishing indefinitely.

The soil of the plains of Northern Mirkwood is rich, and once again with normal rainfall and kind temperatures, vegetation thrives. In turn, the vegetation — grasses to support sheep and cattle, crops — holds the topsoil, thus preventing erosion. (However, Sauron's influence — or a Dragon's — can easily reverse in little time growth that has thrived for hundreds of years, and reduce to cinders and smoke a living green ecosystem that appears indestructible. The Desolation of the Dragons provides gross, vivid proof of the delicate nature of plant growth and survival in Middle-earth.

Living above and beyond the limitations put upon Northern Mirkwood by climate and ecology are the greater creatures, the Eagles and Dragons of the Grey Mountains. (Almost as impressive but more mortal are the forest-dwelling Bears and Great Spiders of Mirkwood proper.) These absolute monarchs of their domains — in the case of the Dragons, one could safely say (whispering from a distance) the malevolent dictators of their states — live and roam pretty much where they please (though the Spiders tend to stay put), interfering in the important affairs of the region as they choose, altering fate where they will. Eagles and Dragons are above the natural law, much-feared and greatly respected; more limited in power, the Bears and Spiders of Mirkwood nonetheless thrive in and dominate their domains. One suspects that each of the Great Four largely escaped the effects of the killing Plague which ravaged the area just a few years before: Eagles and Bears can roam far to find untainted food; the Great Spiders can endure long periods of fasting; Dragons can lay low for centuries. They and only they of the higher animals must have viewed the Great Plague as a nuisance and nothing more.

4.1 THE GREAT EAGLES

Beginning at the sky and working our way down, we first spy the Great Eagles, absolute rulers of the air, in the northern mountains (barring only a Dragon in full battle dress). These greatest of all birds are thought to be of divine creation; the Eldar, the first Elves, believed Eagles to be direct manifestations of the Thought of Manwë, Lord of the Valar. In truth the mighty and majestic Eagles seem worthy of such worship. Never evil, indomitable as the spirit, Eagles lived in the treetops of the world until Manwë ordered them to build their eyries in the peaks and crags of Middle-earth's greatest mountains and keep an eye on the Mortal Lands below, reporting to Him what they saw and heard. These winged reporters were greater in size than their Third Age descendants: Thorondor, the first King of the Eagles, is said to have had a wingspan of 180 feet!

In the turmoil of the First Age the Eagles served the Eldar valiantly; after Beleriand was swallowed up by the Sea, the Eagles flew east, some to settle in the high peaks of the Misty Mountains (then a home to the inhospitable Orcs), and some to the Grey Mountains, where Dragons slept, mated and slept some more. In these high snowy peaks the natural rivalry between the giant beasts sharpened its talons. Later in the Third Age, Dwarves, Elves, Hobbits and men would come to depend upon the Eagles for rescue, information and defense. They were not disappointed.

The Great Eagles of Middle-earth are princely birds. Imperious, swift and proud, these great hunters show no mercy to foe or prey. Clasped in the eagle's talons, one may as well shut his eyes and prepare for eternity, be he unallied with the princes of the sky. Armed with a hooked beak and vice-like, four-toed talons to clutch and crush or impale its prey, an eagle cannot be overcome by struggle or deceit. The eyes of the Eagle are relatively bigger than man's and, unlike other birds, their retinas contain dense concentrations of extraordinarily small light-sensitive cells to aid in color discriminations. (A soaring eagle can perceive details in a landscape eight times better than a man. For example, the Lord of the Eagles can spot a rabbit dashing for cover a mile below him — in the moonlight!) On top of that, an eagle's eyes point both forward and sideways, allowing the great bird an exceptionally wide sector of binocular stereoscopic vision vital for the long-distance sighting and targeting of prey. The highly curved cornea of the eagle allows in plenty of light to aid in hunting at times of low natural light.

The great natural gifts of the Eagles make them valuable allies in war; however domineering and lacking in sentiment, the Eagles are well-spoken and rational. Unlike Dragons, who have — one-on-one — greater destructive power, the Great Eagles of Middle-earth operate as a squadron, and their wisdom and knowledge make them a match for almost any evil force Sauron can gather, excluding the awesome Balrog.

4.2 THE DRAGONS

This is not to sell short the devastation a Dragon, once aroused, can wreak. (The Hobbits' adage, 'Never laugh at live dragons,' is well-founded in experience and common sense.) With a roar like a full-force hurricane, a flying Dragon can set a river steaming like hot tea and reduce to cinders and blackened stumps a thriving settlement of men. Dragons first appeared on the scene in the later First Age when Morgoth, intent upon destroying the Valar, unleashed a host of winged, fire-breathing monsters led by Ancalagon the Black, mightiest of all Middle-earth Dragons. (Ancalagon makes Smaug look like a homesick Hobbit). Fortunately for mankind, Elvenkind and all but Morgoth-kind, Ancalagon was slain (the Elves believe) by Ëarendil in a battle in the sky, and as the monster fell upon the 'Mountains of Tyranny' raised by Morgoth, he flattened them, himself and Morgoth's hopes in one earth-shuddering crash that instantly invalidated all contemporary topographical maps of Middle-earth.

Dragons, while unwise, are cunning and cruel creatures who can reason, dream and even prophecy; they are always ready to suspect the worst of others since they themselves are always up to the worst. Nothing pleases a Dragon more than sacking a town of its treasure, gathering the booty into a golden heap and nesting upon it for a century or two. (Dragons never seen to consider the utter uselessness of their endeavors: why bother? Perhaps it's instinct.) However, Dragons do have genuine weaknesses: they tend to grow complacent and vain if unchallenged, giving themselves away in riddling talk, and each seems to have an Achilles heel, or soft spot, where its armor can be pierced and its vital organs damaged. The dreadful shriek of a mortally-wounded Dragon is a sound not-soon-forgotten by man or beast within earshot.

4.3 THE GIANT SPIDERS

Perhaps no creatures in Middle-earth have tingled so many spines and inspired so many 'Yechs!' of disgust as the the Giant Spiders of Mirkwood. (Even an ardent arachnidophile, or spider-lover, would be hard-pressed to justify any admiration for these hissing, creaking, spluttering polluters of the forest.) The Spider-race of Middle-earth apparently traces itself to a single ancient ancestor: Ungoliant, the Devourer of Light. A mysterious entity dating to the beginning of the world, Ungoliant was the first Great "Demon" to roam the earth, poisoning and killing trees (at Morgoth's instigation) until swollen by her gorging; she — Ungoliant — first chased away, then ran from the Evil Lord and made her way to the Mountains of Terror, the Ered Gorgoroth in the north of Beleriand. There she mated with smaller (and no doubt too-terrified-to-say 'No thank you') creatures to produce hideous offspring like Shelob the Great, to mention a more-infamous tyke. What happened to Ungoliant remains a mystery; she may still be hiding in a deep cavern in the mountains or more happily for us, may have devoured herself in the desert sometime in the Second Age.

Of Shelob, heir to Ungoliant's charms, we know little more. After the drowning of Beleriand at the end of the First Age, Shelob escaped south to the Mountains of Terror in western Mordor to build her lair in what was aptly called the Spider's Pass. A superb if undiscriminating guard, Shelob lived there quite contentedly for most of two Ages, poisoning and sucking dry whatever and whomever she might encounter, for "all living things were her food and her vomit darkness." (*LotR. IV,* Chap. 9) One is impressed to note that although Shelob feasts upon Sauron's orcs, the Dark Lord never attempts to do her in; for she is too fine a weapon.

But closer to home, in the heart of Mirkwood lurks a dark colony of lesser spiders, themselves distant relatives of Ungoliant and Shelob. These spiders live and attack as a group, apparently cooperating amongst themselves to a remarkable degree (considering their appetites) debating in thin creaks and hisses how best to age their drugged prey. Spiders can only eat living beings; their digestive systems are too specialized to deal with vegetation or dead creatures of any kind. Actually, spiders are not bloodsuckers (as are the vampire bats of the region): spiders inject into the victim a poison which turns the innards to a delectable jelly which the spider then pumps out (with the aid of a 'sucking stomach') and consumes, leaving its prey the proverbial 'empty shell of its former self.' For the dirty work, a spider possesses a pair of fanged claws connecting to a poison gland; another pair of claws manipulates the prey as need be. Spiders are vulnerable to attack from below and possess eight primitive eyes.

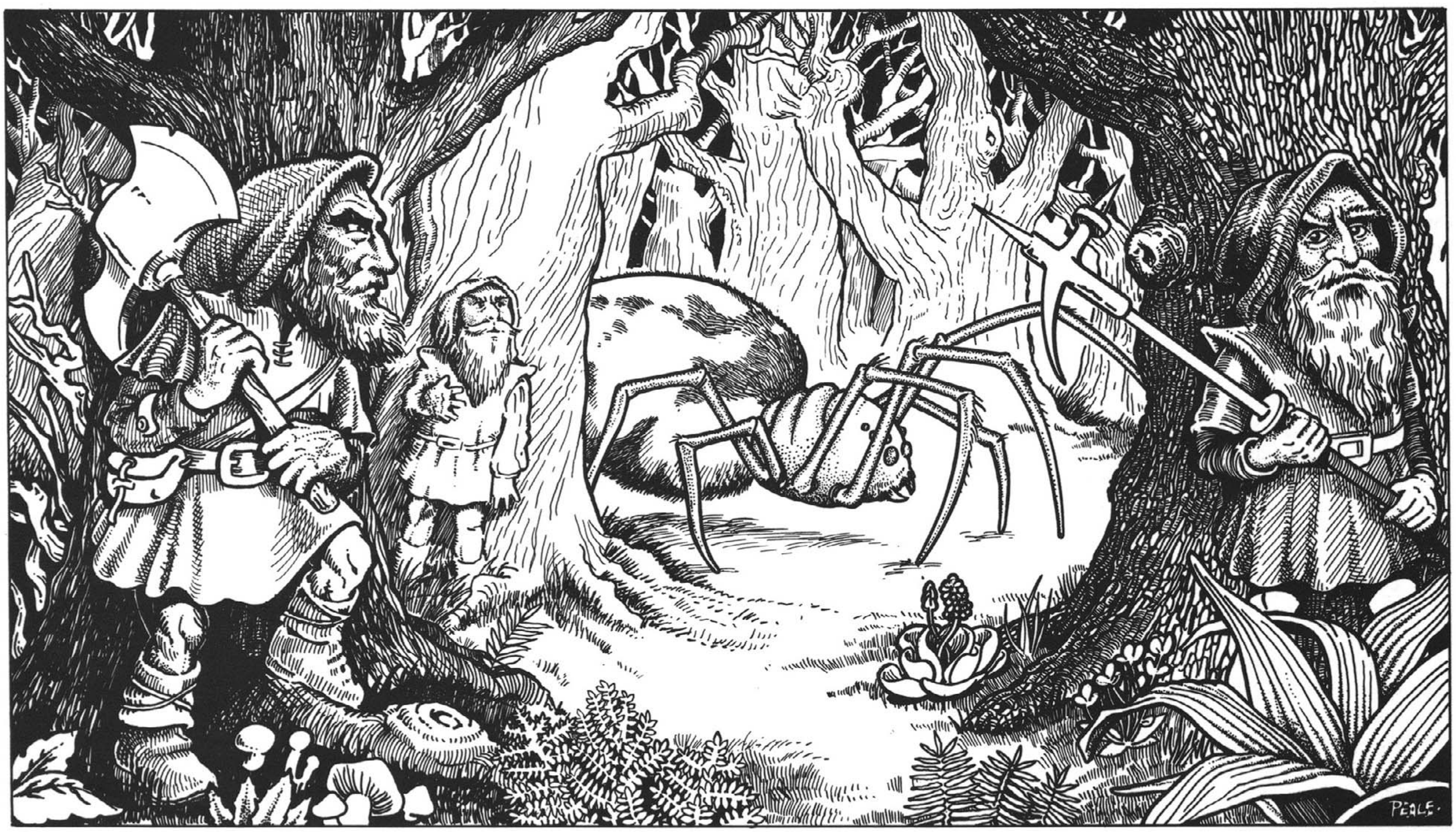
Most impressive of the spider's efforts is of course its web, made of fine silk proteins which emerge through minute nozzles or spinnerets at the rear of the body. The proteins solidify in the air, forming wrapped fibers which the spider shapes into a distinctively patterned web. So sensitive to stirrings in its web is the spider that it can discriminate between the wind blowing through the web and a fly — or something larger — landing on it. (Built-in vibration receptors in the legs enable the spider to interpret the web's movements so aptly.) When confronted by a colony of hungry Great Spiders, the adventurer is advised to flee or fight to the death — but do not hesitate! The Spider's poison and sticky webs can render even large beings, like men, helpless in a matter of seconds.

4.4 THE BEARS

Enough of gruesome, loathsome, evil creatures! Consider the mighty monarchs of the woods, the Great Bears and their lesser brethren the black bears. Unlike the covetous Dragon or the wily Great Spider, the Great Bear feeds himself on a diet consisting largely of nuts, fruits, berries, roots and insects, although like man and the rat, he will eat anything to survive. (Bears love lilies, devouring the flower, root, stem, leaves and bloom! Who says bears don't appreciate beauty?) A bear's only crime — call it 'breaking and entering' — is raiding the honey bee's hives at every opportunity. Like man, bears enjoy fishing and eating fish; the giant's six-inch claws and steel-trapped jaws more than compensate for any disregard of poles and bait. With such a varied diet, the bear has adapted varied teeth for survival: strong, conical canines up front, grinders for cheek teeth and molars in the rear for crushing nuts and berries.

A bear's senses — hearing, smell, taste and vision — are extraordinarily sensitive. An opportunist adaptive in diet and prey, he can hunt and enjoy mice, beetles, ground squirrels, boar, elk, deer and carrion, all of which flourished in Mirkwood before the Plague and most of which survived in substantial numbers the disease that so weakened the Northmen. And unlike man, the bear passes the winter alone, hibernating, thus resisting the spread of the Plague by the very nature of his more solitary existence.

With a galloping stride of seventeen feet and a common walking speed of six miles an hour, the Great Bear is difficult to elude in his home, the thickets of the wilderness. When encountered, the bear will most likely rise to his hind feet — a bear's feet are flat and have unretractable claws — sniff the air and scurry off. However, in mating season the male bear will chase his chosen female for miles, through, over and around any obstacle. It is unwise to ask a favor of him at this time — you may be met by a bawl like a bull's, and worse!



Black or 'lesser' bears mature at five or six years of age and can grow to be seven feet tall and weigh over 400 pounds. (If you're thinking of eluding one by climbing a tree, consider that the black bear can scurry up a tree faster than a squirrel.) Lesser bears have been known to live over forty years; they do suffer dehydration in the heat and often require a good deal of fresh water in the summer months.

It is no accident and no insult that men living in the wilds of Northern Mirkwood are rumored to be bear-like; in fact, when flayed, the body of a bear — but for its size — looks very much like a man's. And like man, the bear is a survivor, a generalist in a world of specialists, determined to be master of all he surveys.

4.5 THE WOLVES

If the bear is the loner in the societies of the wilderness, the wolf is the communist. (These opposite lifestyles are especially interesting because the bear and the wolf apparently share a common ancestor). Wolves travel, hunt, feed and rest in a pack, a sometimes loose association of individual animals bound by a bond of attachment and a well-developed social system. Order is established and maintained by dominance; an alpha pair rules with the assent and cooperation of the rest of the pack. The toughest, wisest, largest male — often approaching 90 pounds in weight — and the female most likely to produce strong pups mate and form a ruling family. Should a rival male displace the leader — usually by chasing him off after a fight — he will kill the pups of the ex-leader and mate with the dominant female himself. Juveniles join the pack as full-fledged members of the hunt at two years of age. The pack is **not** a true autocracy: leaders are replaced by duel, and it is the assent of the members that determines who leads them.

Some wolf packs contain as many as forty members, but the size of the pack — usually between two and eight — depends upon the area of the territory they roam (which is often more than 100 square miles) and the abundance of prey and other wolves in the area. Pack size is naturally limited by mortality, disease and reproductive rates: the Plague probably decimated the wolves of Northern Mirkwood, but they certainly survived in numbers large enough to prove a threat to the men, Dwarves and Elves of the region when allied with Wargs and Orcs at the end of the Third Age.

The pack communicates through smell, hearing, vision and of course, speech and howls. The wolves of Northern Mirkwood speak the language of the Wargs and are large enough to be ridden like horses by Orcs.

4.6 THE FLEA AND THE GREAT PLAGUE

The lowly flea, mass murderer of Mirkwood? Impossible! No, it's true. As chief transmitter of the Great Plague from rats, ground squirrels and other rodents to the higher animals and man, the common flea caused more suffering and death than any fire-breathing Dragon or a dozen colonies of Giant Spiders. In fact, after the Great Plague hit Mirkwood in 1636, more than half of its inhabitants were struck down. About half of those infected survived, the only 'cure' being proper sanitary measures not generally practiced at the time.

The Great Plague was caused by a tiny bacterium. No one knows why the Plague suddenly activated; we know only that a foul wind from the East and South spread the pestilence through Gondor and Mirkwood beginning in the Winter of 1635-1636.

Actually the flea is quite an athlete. A flea can jump a distance of 300 times his own length of about one-sixteenth of an inch. To locate its host ('blood donor,' if you prefer), it uses his well-developed sense of smell. Should that fail, he can detect the presence of a host nearby through sensing the body warmth of the larger creature or by 'sniffing' carbon dioxide in the air near the host's mouth during exhilation. Once settled on its host, the flea can wait for a year or more before feeding. And remarkably, a flea can adjust the 'teeth' of his comb, the toothlike spines on the flea's back, to just the proper distance to insure he sticks to his host unfailingly.

It is now four years since the Great Plague first laid low Northern Mirkwood. Creatures who fled before the pestilence have returned, although the forest is somewhat changed. There are fewer animals competing for survival, but the insects and lower creatures have been pretty much unaffected. Beasts and birds who act as spies can safely return to their posts to continue their duty. Barn owls and screech owls have come back and are kept busy holding down the rodent population, which flourished during the Plague; deer and black squirrels have recovered and are busy rebuilding their numbers. And in the Spring, thousands of dark-grey and black moths gather to block out the sun in the meadows of Mirkwood. The forest seems all but unaffected by the Plague.

4.7 THE SHADOW ON THE FOREST

In the Mountains nuts, blackberries and hawthornberries grow and prosper, but not so abundantly as before, while in the bushy grasslands thyme, sage and marjoram sprout. In oak-lined dales patches of clover, purple and white, permeate the air with their scent while bees bigger than hornets continue their sweet labors in the upper vales of the Anduin, near the Carrock. Deep in the forest grow fungi — some of it edible — and pale medicinal herbs with unpleasant odors. In the Elves' kingdom of eastern Mirkwood, near solid stands of mighty oak and beech trees, the sweet, pungent aroma of the healing *Athelas* plant is in the air.

At first glance all appears normal. But the trunks of the oaks are torturously gnarled, their branches twisted in pain, as if arthritic. Leaves darken and lengthen in their struggle. Ivy strangles the trees and trails to the ground like a serpent. Mirkwood has survived the pestilence, true. But it is a deeper, darker place than before; no one goes to the woods for a picnic anymore. They are afraid, afraid of what's happened — and what is yet to come. Note: for the shadow of Dol Guldur is ever-lengthening and unrelenting as death.

THE CLIMATE AND CALENDAR OF NORTHERN RHOVANION

Months	Mirkwood	Lowlands	Highlands	N. Waste
— Yestarë	(intercalary day: *Yule*)			
1) **Narwain** (*Winter*)	10-45° Moderate	10-40° Moderate	-10-30° Moderate	-25-25° Dry
2) **Nínui** (*Winter*)	10-40° Dry	5-35° Dry	-15-25° Moderate	-25-20° Very Dry
3) **Gwaeron** (*Winter*)	20-50° Moderate	15-45° Dry	-5-30° Moderate	-10-25° Dry
4) **Gwirith** (*Spring*)	30-60° Heavy	25-55° Moderate	5-40° Heavy	0-30° Moderate
5) **Lothron** (*Spring*)	40-65° Moderate	30-60° Moderate	15-50° Moderate	5-40° Dry
6) **Nórui** (*Spring*)	50-70° Heavy	45-65° Heavy	25-60° Heavy	10-45° Moderate
— Loëndë	(intercalary day: *Midyears*)			
7) **Cerveth** (*Summer*)	50-75° Very Heavy	50-80° Very Heavy	25-65° Heavy	10-50° Heavy
8) **Úrui** (*Summer*)	55-85° Very Heavy	55-90° Heavy	25-75° Heavy	10-60° Moderate
9) **Ivanneth** (*Summer*)	55-80° Moderate	55-85° Moderate	20-65° Moderate	5-45° Dry
10) **Narbeleth** (*Fall*)	45-65° Heavy	30-65° Moderate	15-55° Moderate	0-35° Moderate
11) **Hithui** (*Fall*)	35-60° Moderate	25-60° Moderate	10-50° Dry	-5-30° Dry
12) **Girithron** (*Fall*)	20-45° Moderate	15-45° Moderate	0-40° Dry	-10-25° Very Dry
— Mettarë	(intercalary day: *Yearsend*)			

Calendar Note: *Mannish groups in the region use the twelve-month* ***King's Reckoning*** *shown above. This calendar is used throughout the territories conquered by Gondor, and is prevalent in a number of regions where* ***Westron*** *is commonly spoken.*

Precipitation Codes: *Very Dry = less than one inch; Dry = one to two inches; Moderate = two to three inches; Heavy = four to five inches; Very Heavy = over five inches.*

Climate Note: *The mean annual temperate south of the Grey Mountains is 40-50°; there the annual precipitation mean is 20-40 inches. In the Grey Mountains the mean annual temperature is 25-35°, and the mean annual precipitation is 20-40 inches. North of the mountain barrier the annual temperature mean is 15-25°; the mean for precipitation there is 10-20 inches.*

5.0 THE INHABITANTS: WAYS OF LIFE (T.A. 1640)

Giants and Dragons and Orcs and Trolls
Murder and plunder and hide in their holes;
Run from them Wanderer, and hide away —
And you may live to fight another day!

Thranduil's Folk and the Dwarves of the Hills
Offer no haven, but add to the thrills;
This is Mirkwood, my friend! You're on your own—
Like the Northman, you must go it alone!

So beware and be wary —
Choose your companions caref'ly;
Or you may be eaten ***alive*** *and* ***whole***
By Giant or Dragon or Orc or Troll!

Northern Mirkwood is the unstirred melting pot of Middle-earth: nowhere is there a greater variety of folk, beings, creatures and men than here. Yet their numbers are small, and Mirkwood is large — there's room to roam without bumping into a neighbor.

The forest of Mirkwood, once a place of light and growth and incessant animal activity, has grown dark and dismal, the forest floor now thick with black Nightshade. Having fled the Great Plague of four years ago, men are returning in numbers to the rich Anduin River valley and the woods and plains of the Rhovanion from the refuge of the Grey Mountains. Meanwhile, Thranduil's Elves and the Dwarves of the Iron Hills keep a low profile (unless disturbed), as if swallowed up by the rocky caverns they call home. Even the birds and beasts are wary; only at Rhosgobel, where Radagast protects and cares for them, do the creatures of Mirkwood let loose with full-throated warbles and howls of delight.

Activity is on the upswing now. Men are rebuilding, tending to the homes they abandoned in the undertow of fear swept along in the killing waves of the Great Plague. At the Long Lake, men and Elves have resumed trading; wines from the Dorwinion are no longer impossible to obtain - only expensive. Men once again have hope for the future; they break earth and sow seeds in the Spring.

But there is danger. Not from an unseen mass - Killer (spread by the unlikeliest of accomplices, the common flea), but from the quite-visible orcs and trolls who raid ever-more frequently the relatively-unprotected Northman settlements of the Rhovanion plains. Worse, there are rumors of Giants stirring in the mountains, and reports of a Dragon's roar in the desolate Withered Heath. (A few brave men had run to these unlikely hideouts to duck the raging pestilence.) The middle of the Third Age is no time to grind your sword into a plowshare.

But centuries off is the actuality of invasion from the East. Only a vague dread and the fear of conquest beat in the blood of the men farming and tending their animals near the eastern eaves of Mirkwood, on the plains of the Rhovanion. Here, men work and watch, everpoised, a sword or an axe within reach. Their wives and children watch too, on guard for a darkening horde on the horizon and the thunder of armies on the move.

Still, it is a better time now, in T.A. 1640, than just a few years ago, when blackened, bloated bodies heaped into piles were set ablaze, when one man of two suffered terribly and died. The bodies are gone now; only the fouling of the water and the drooping, aching leaves of the beeches and oaks indicate Sauron's interest of the recent, hideous past. Outside the black and frowning wall of Mirkwood's borders, far north of Dol Guldur, the sky is blue, the sun is shining.

Just how bad was it four years ago, when the Great Plague it Mirkwood full-force? A contemporary poet reveals the horror and hopelessness of the times:

Funeral pyres light the evening sky —
The stench of Death, the widow's cry —
So common now we pass them by.

Evil has claimed the rivers and trees,
A foul breath is the morning breeze,
No sun to put the heart at ease.

Who can withstand, who can fight
The Evil Forces of the night?
Who can face the gloomy fright
of day's dawning without light?

- Anonymous fragment, Circa T.A. 1637

Read this final quatrain of lament apparently added a few years later by another Middle-earth poet (note the different rhyme scheme):

So sing a sad song of Mirkwood -
once the mighty Greenwood the Great -
for all we've lost - the Valiant! the Good! -
and all that Evil can dissipate!

- Anonymous, Circa T.A. 1640

The bad times are behind us, the Northmen try to convince themselves. Only the Elves, who can read the signs of change over the centuries, know what is coming and yet harbor no fear, for they, in their arrogance, imagine themselves invulnerable to Sauron's dagger-thrust from the East.

5.1 THE WOOD-ELVES

Imagine yourself immortal. **Undying. Ageless.** And picture yourself wise (as only an immortal is wise) and beautiful and elegant,taller and leaner than men, quicker and quieter too. **Perfect.** You measure the happenings of Middle-earth not in years or decades or even centuries but in millenia and Ages, great chunks of time in which generations of men flow by like a river as you sit munching **Lembas** and sipping **Miruvor**, the 'cordial of Imladris,' on the grassy bank. Imagine too that you can speak and sing and make your own enchanting music day-in and day-out and that working magic is as simple and innate as breathing, and that you never have to work at mining or farming or crafting jewels, or anything that makes you sweat or gets your hands dirty. You don't even sleep! Hard to be humble, isn't it?

Such is the lot of the Elf. Truly the Chosen Children of the Ainur, Elves are the First-Born and most-beloved of the Angelic Powers. If there is anything an Elf cannot do, he will probably convince you to teach him how and then quickly surpass you in skill. An Elf can out-smart, out-talk and out-sing every other being in Middle-earth: the Elf's only problem is that he has no problems. He is arrogant, aloof and rather disappointed in the Lesser creations of the Valar, especially the Dwarves and Men who followed the Elder Race in creation and lagged behind in every way. Yet an Elf hesitates to give advice, it being thought dangerous.

But Elves, like every race, have a history; their story, like any history, tells not just of peace and contentment but of strife and division too. Long ago, when wild animals made the only sounds heard in the forests and valleys and mountains of the world, before Good and Evil had begun their exhaustive and seemingly-endless battle, the Elves awoke and looked out with wonder upon the unspoiled expanse of the earth. Their first desire, rather like a man-child's at two or three years of age - was to name everything and to speak with it. (The High-elven name for all Elvenkind is *Quendi*, 'The Speakers.') The sheer joy of communication was never lost to the Elves, even after their sundering and subsequent woes; it is sad that by mid-Third Age, Sindarin is a dying language.

For an ageless period the Firstborn Children of Eru, the Elves, wandered the eastern forests and the area around the waters of Cuiviénen, the ancient lake beside which they were born, talking amongst themselves and to the beasts and growing things of the woods, learning their every thought. As leaders, the Elder Race were superb communicators and awoke in living things a previously unrecognized sense of destiny and purpose. No other race has surpassed the Elves in the nobility and beauty of this, their first great mission on Middle-earth; one shudders to think what might have been had Morgoth instead first awakened and 'educated' the flora and fauna and the lesser beings of the world. To pass the time, they also embroidered, drew and carved, always with an eye toward the finer things (unlike those dirty little metalsmiths, the Dwarves).

The Elves soon learned that although they themselves are unchanging in nature, the world is not. They divided into two main branches; the *Avari*, or East-elves, who were largely content to live with the bustle and change of the Mortal Lands; and the *Eldar*, or West-elves, whom destiny urged to sail west to the Undying Lands, leaving behind the tumble and tumult of Middle-earth. Early in the First Age the *Noldor* and the *Vanyar*, two of the three Kindred Houses of the Eldar, set sail west to the shores of Aman, a holy land where they expected to live in harmony and godlike tranquillity for all time; but the Grey-Elves (or *Sindar*), already attached spiritually and materially to the Mortal Lands, chose to remain behind with some of the *Avari*, a huge group which included a band of Silvan-elves who settled in the Wilderland and Greenwood the Great.

But trouble was already brewing. The forging of the Silmarils, the three jewels of unbearable beauty which held within them the sacred light of the Two Trees of Valinor, led to no good; Morgoth seized the jewels and terrorized First Age Middle-earth, unleashing Balrogs, Giants, Orcs and Trolls to do his evil bidding. Only the intervention of the Valar prevented the domination of evil over good. The making of the Rings of Power,

themselves created to heal the wounds from the battle for the Silmarils, caused even more trouble. True, Elves did learn to fashion weapons of extraordinary power, including swords that shone with a blue light when Orcs were in the vicinity and which burned or pained the enemy when seized. But in the Second Age, after Morgoth's defeat, Sauron, the Evil Lord's prodigy, forged the Rings of Power (with the unwitting aid of the Elves) and thus began the War of the Rings. It seems that all the beauty of Elven-crafts is destined to bring sorrow and conflict, and that their attempts to heal and aid the world of Men and Dwarves is doomed to fail.

By the Third Age, Elves are few and far-between and much-removed from the power-centers of the world, rather like elderly land-barrons too bored and world-weary to battle a land-grabbing neighbor. The remaining High-elves live with Elrond at Rivendell or at Lindon with Cirdan, or just wander the westlands; the Sindar have gathered in Lothlórien with Celeborn and Galadriel and, of course, at Thranduil's Kingdom in Northern Mirkwood.

Theirs is a sad history, then, the story of these People of the Stars whose voices held more melody than any others and whose gifts led to their own sundering and very nearly to the destruction of the world.

5.11 THE ELVEN GIFTS OF LANGUAGE AND SCRIPT

But what good have the Elves given the world? First and foremost, Elves taught the world to speak and to sing and to write - and thus to record history (and in an sense, to **create** it), to document growth and change in cultures. Elves are Middle-earth's poets, singers and historians; they invented the words that describe all that we know of early times, and they kept the records. When the *Noldor* returned to Middle-earth in the First Age to reclaim the Silmarils stolen by Morgoth, they mixed with their lesser-brethren and gave them an alphabet and a script. The Grey-elves thus adopted much of the folklore and culture of the Noldor, including the *Tengwar*, the High-elven cursive alphabet of 36 'letters' (and as flowery a script as you're likely ever to see). After a while the Grey-elves, who spoke *Sindarin* (the most widely-spoken Elven-language), lived and mixed with the Wood-elves and passed on their Noldor learning to their more rustic and earthbound brothers. Eventually, in a leap across cultures, the Dwarves of Moria learned and used the Grey-elven alphabet created by the First Age minstrel Daeron, and in a changed form, found its runes, or *Certhas* (Cirth), valuable for sealing their own secrets. The elaborate *Angerthas Moria*, or 'Long-rune-rows' of Durin's Folk, provided them with a system for keeping their hidden treasures safe and secret. The *Cirth*, which appears on the tombs of Dwarves and marks secret passageways, for example, is most puzzling to the untutored. In a debased and simplified form, Orcs and other servants of Sauron also used the Grey-elven alphabet to plot their evil works. Thus, nothing the High-elves brought to Middle-earth remained pure and good, not even language, which was to them the magic of communication.

But the Elves' best pupils were the *Edain*, the three Houses of Men who traveled west to Beleriand and studied the ways of the Elves living there. (It must be said that the High-elves gave unselfishly of their wisdom and enriched the Edain with knowledge and an appreciation of the finer things men might never have known otherwise; Elves seem to know that they were not destined to rule the Mortal Lands, that the Edain would be the eventual inheritors of Middle-earth's bounties and sorrows.)

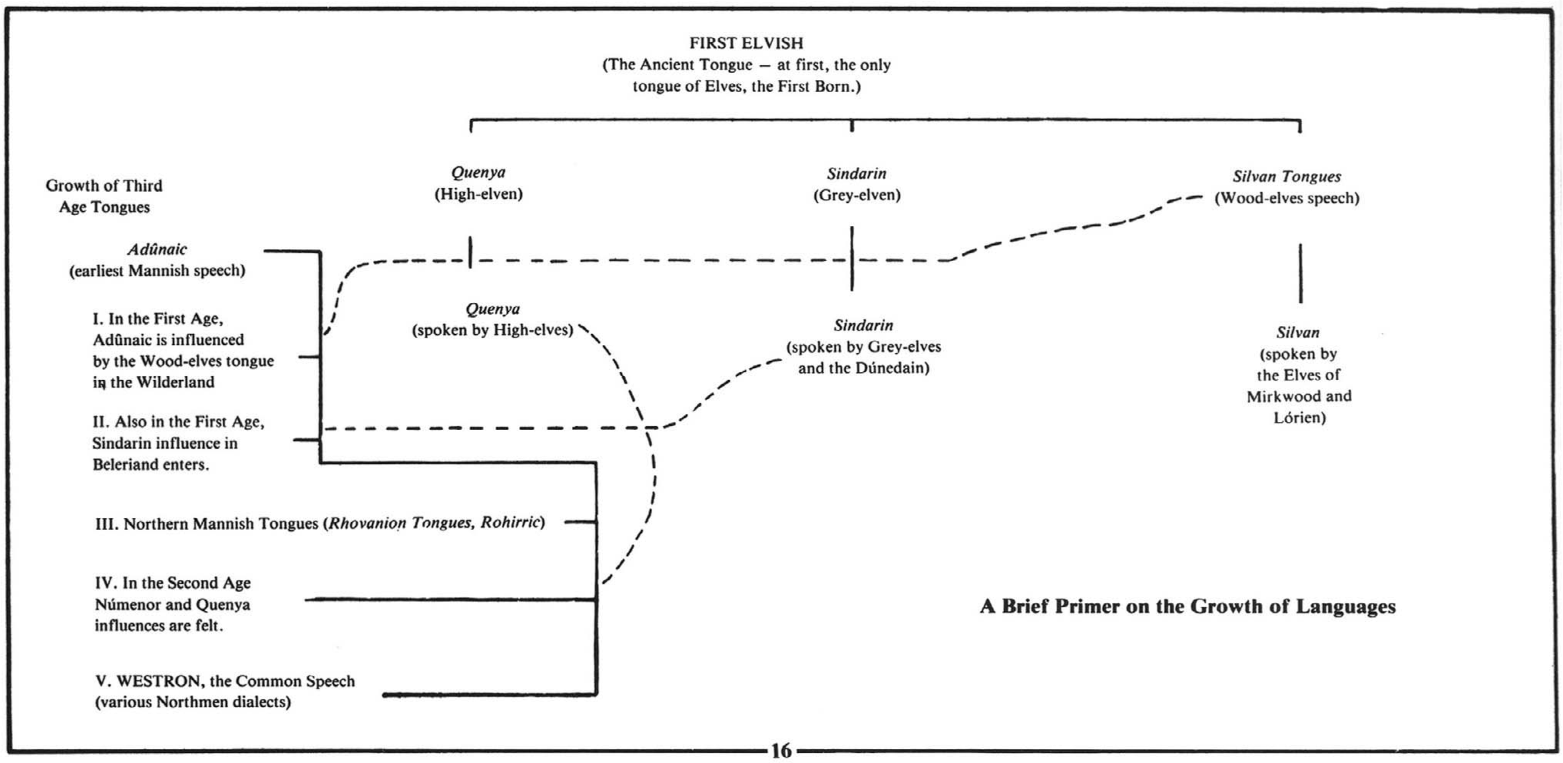
All Elven alphabets stem from the *Tengwar Alphabet of Rúmil*, a Noldor Elf of Tirion, the beautiful Elven city of the Undying Lands. Although it did not reach the Mortal Lands in its original form, Rúmil's Alphabet greatly influenced the *Alphabet of Fëanor*, which spread through Númenor in the Second Age. Fëanor's Alphabet is interesting because it is a system based on brush and pen-work, not carving and inscription - it is a moveable, viable script.

An example of the Noldor Tengwar adapted by the Sindar is the inscription on the West-door of Moria, where certain 'letters' assume vowel functions and replace the older system of the High-elves in which diacritic marks placed above the preceding consonant represented vowels. This new system, known as the *Mode of Beleriand*, expanded the original consonant-group of Tengwar into a full-fledged alphabet. (Both forms of Tengwar are phonetic and if you're an Elf, easily learned and spoken.) Thus, all races used the Tengwar - except the Dwarves, who prefer the secretive and lengthy rune-rows of Moria, the Cirth. By mid-Third Age most men of learning in the West know and use the letters of Fëanor.

5.12 THE COMING OF THRANDUIL

No other race loves poetry and song as do the Elves (true, Hobbits can be light-hearted), and King Thranduil's Wood-elves are no exception. Even as they clasp you in irons and lead you through carved halls of beauty created early in the Second Age, Thranduil's Folk sing. It was in the last Age that Thranduil led a band of Grey-elves east over the sharp horns of the Misty Mountains, hoping to found a Woodland Realm in the wilderland beyond. The Wood-elves native to the forest welcomed the more-learned Sindar as royalty and with the aid of the nearby Dwarves, overcame their distaste for underground-living and dug out an awesome palace beneath a hill in north-east Mirkwood (Amon Thranduil), where Thranduil's Folk live to this day. But how did the Silvan, or Wood-elves, come to be there in the first place?

When the Elves as one journeyed west toward the Undying Lands of Aman in the First Age, some of them - including many of the Silvan - chose not to cross the mighty Misty Mountains; the "sea-longing" was not so deep within these Elves, for they were weary of wandering. So they remained and flourished in the vales of the Anduin, although splitting again and again into smaller groups. The Silvan - ruddy-faced, sandy-haired folk similar in appearance to the Grey-elves - are light of build and step, great hunters with bow and spear, and dress in forest greens and browns, for both camouflage and comfort (thus shunning the bright ceremonial robes and gowns of the Fair-elves). As King, Thranduil wears a crown - appropriately enough - of berries and leaves in the autumn, or flowers in spring, for the Wood-elves cherish the forest and its growing things.



A Brief Primer on the Growth of Languages



5.13 DAILY LIFE AMONG THE WOOD-ELVES

In Oropher, Thranduil's father, the Wood-elves found a King to lead them in their wanderings along the Anduin. After Oropher's death in the Last Alliance, Thranduil led the Elves to the caverns of Northern Mirkwood. Their home — while not so grand a palace as that of Tirion in the Undying Lands (where crystal stairs and lamplighted towers are the order of the day) — is vast and lovely and bewildering enough to awe and befuddle any non-Elvish outsider. (Wood-elves view any outsider as an intruder with criminal intent.)

Still, the Silvan Folk do trade and to a small degree, feast with the men at Long Lake, bartering apples and Elvish goodies for Dorwinion wines and other hard-to-get delicacies unknown to Mirkwood. The Forest River serves as their lifeline to the world of men; however, any time they tire of dealing with outsiders, the Wood-elves simply drop the watergate, lower the portcullis and entertain themselves for months on end. Next to invulnerable in their well-lighted caverns, Wood-elves need nothing from the outside world except benign neglect. (But neglect is one favor Sauron is unlikely to grant Thranduil's Folk.) Feasting is the Wood-elves' delight. Great party-givers, they sing and dance and play harps by torchlight, under the stars, and consume vast amounts of roast meats. True flower-children, they wear gems on their collars and belts and sing happy songs often made up at the moment. One word of warning: their magic is strong, but Wood-elves are less wise and thus more dangerous than the High-elves of the West, so watch out!

There is a burden born by the Immortals. One tires of everything; only song and play keep the heart light. With nothing to fear but the rare violent death and the subsequent and sometimes fatal mourning for a fallen kinsman, with not even a battle scar to brag about, the Elf faces an eternity of ever-darkening days, for each day the Shadow of Sauron creeps nearer the entrance of Thranduil's Caverns. Men, once eager pupils, now yearn to rule all of Mirkwood; the Realm of the Wood-elves stands challenged, alone and weary and almost afraid.

5.2 THE DWARVES

The Elves call them *Naugrim* (S. "the Stunted People") and *Gonnhirrim* (S. "Stonemasters"), but Dwarves call themselves **Khazâd** and the 'Children of Aulë,' the Valars' greatest smith and handicraft-instructor. Created underground and in secret by Aulë, who disobeyed Eru's commands in making them, the Seven Fathers of the Dwarves were laid to rest until the Firstborn, the Elves, awakened and began to walk about naming things. Is it coincidence that this most-secretive race was **born** in secret? That Dwarves and not Elves or Men created *moon-letters*, runes which are only visible when the 'right' moon hits them? That Dwarves never let their Dwarvish names be known, even in death?

To combat the power of Morgoth, who was loose and wreaking havoc at the time, Aulë made the Dwarves physically tough, stubborn and uxceptionally long-lived (up to 400 years!). Although a foot or two shorter than Elves, Dwarves are strong and unbending as stone (and just as easygoing) and are resistant to virtually any poison or disease, including the Plague. (Orcs well-understand this, realizing the only sure way to kill a Dwarf is to chop off his head.) Proud of their craft, metal and stonework, Dwarves scoff at the magic of the Elves yet treasure enchanted weapons and gems of beauty like the (late Third Age) Arkenstone, and have been known to cast spells over booty to protect it. Devilishly attractive to the female Dwarf — whom a Dwarf-husband guards as though irresistible to any sentient being — a male Dwarf in braided beard and chains of silver and mithril must set his wife's heart a-pounding. Yet oddly, two of every three Dwarves are male, and few marry. Fewer yet have children. Perhaps the Dwarves, in their stony nature and origin, lack the seething passions of the more hot-blooded race of men, whom the Dwarves tutor in smithing. Anyway, Dwarves seem in little danger of imminent extinction, and because of their nature, can endure great weariness and trial uncomplainingly; and they are more fireproof than Elves.

A race with deep-seated religious beliefs, Dwarves believe that when they die Aulë, their maker, cares for them and leads them to the halls of Mandos, where they await Eru's permission to join the Elves in a blissful if segregated eternity. Dwarves also practice ancestor-worship, professing that their Seven Fathers in some sense return to live again in their descendants who bear their ancient names. Thus, the Dwarves' history records Durin (I) the Deathless and several 'Durins' afterward.

A great hero of the Dwarves is the above-mentioned King, Durin the First. Back in the Eldar Days, Durin traveled to Azanulbizar, a vale east of the Misty Mountains and gazing into a lake there, saw in his reflection a crown of seven stars - in broad daylight! Durin interpreted the vision as a sign of great things to come (and not as the result of ingesting a batch of potent magic mushrooms) and made his home in the caves above the lake, thus founding the great Dwarvish realm of Khazad-dûm, an empire which lasts until this day. To celebrate Durin's achievements and vision, Dwarves gather to party and feast annually on Durin's Day, the Dwarves' New Year's Day. (Durin's Day falls in the Autumn on the first day of the final new crescent moon of the season, just at the time when the moon and the sun appear in the sky at once. Just keeping all that clear and not snoozing through the lunar-solar juxtaposition seem cause enough for celebration.)

5.21 A BRIEF DWARVEN HISTORY

Jumping back in time, the Seven Fathers of the Dwarves, once awakened by Aulë, wandered westward until they crossed the Blue Mountains in Beleriand and met the Elves who even then were meticulously recording their own history. Always jealous and suspicious of each other - the Elves resented the fact that the Dwarves had been created first, even though only by a Smith - Elves and Dwarves soon found much more to fight about than who came first.

In Beleriand, Dwarves settled to mine and excavate caves in that western land; when Sindarin Elves came, they persecuted the runty Dwarves, forcing them to do the Sindar's bidding. Not until more Dwarves came, proud members of the race of the Khazâd, did the persecution cease. By then the Dwarves had created magnificent cities in Moria and cut into the eastern side of the Blue Moultains the twin cities of Nogrod and Belegost. At this time Elves and Dwarves joined forces to battle Morgoth; Dwarves engineered roads and built halls used by the Elves, and trade between the races grew healthy. But never did they come to trust or like each other.

The first great split between Elf and Dwarf came in the First Age when the Dwarves of Nogrod marched against Thingol Greycloak, the Elven-king at Doriath, and slew him for the Nauglamîr, a breathtaking golden necklace inlaid with a Silmaril (the jewel irresistible to the Dwarves, who had made it). The Dwarves overcame Thingol's reasonable objections - after all, it was a gift given him by a man who'd taken it from a Dragon - with a swing of the axe that left the wise king both speech- and head-less.

Not all Dwarves were so reckless and greedy. To the Southeast, across the Misty Mountains stood Moria, Khazad-dûm to the faithful, the greatest city of its day. Here for thousands of years Durin's folk showed the world what civilization could be: beautiful, functional yet fiercely warlike and independent, and very secretive. In the seemingly endless tunnels and pathways of many-colored stone, in the vast ancestral halls lighted by shimmering crystal lamps and hung with paintings and hangings and sculptures of beasts and birds, the Dwarves marshalled their forces and aligned row after row of glittering spears, swords and axes and shining banners, gleaming mail and shields, all ready for action. Works of beauty, often made of silver and inlaid with jewels, were there for the viewing, while below in the caverns miners dug with pick and basket for gold, silver and jewels long-

trapped in the rocks that were shoved up from the molten core of the earth Ages before.

Expert craftsmen, Dwarves first pickled the gold they mined to remove impurities, employing huge bellows to heat the fire, and used depletion gilding, a chemical process that extracts from the surface all traces of elements other than gold. Final steps include casting, or forming an object by pouring liquid molten metal into molds, and chasing, or decorating the object by incising its surface with a sharp tool. No race takes greater pride in its craft than the Dwarves, for whether working on a bracelet, a toy for men-children or a stabbing sword, the Dwarf will insure it is a uniquely-beautiful object. In fact, the only creation of ugliness attributed to the Dwarves is the Dwarvish battle mask, a hideous thing much-resembling an Orc as he gets up in the morning.

Aboveground at Khazad-dûm, masons and engineers built and extended roads, waterways, towers and terraces, and designed vast chambers dedicated to the glory of Durin. All of this treasure was guarded at the gates by a retinue of stony, mail-clad warriors. Amongst themselves, Dwarves speak Khuzdul, the Dwarf-tongue know only to them and one of Middle-earth's great cultural secrets; yet, among others, Dwarves can speak Elvish tongues and the Common Speech very well. When not working, Dwarves are fond of wine and ale and cooking outdoors, for they can make a fire anywhere, any time. Fine musicians, they play violas as big as they are, as well as fiddles, flutes, drums and clarinets. One imagines their music as high in spirit but lacking the ineffable subtlety of the Elves.

With the discovery of mithril in Moria in the Second Age, Dwarves from all over flocked to Moria to make their fortunes. (Elves value mithril above everything else.) But when Sauron and the Elves battled in the Second Age, the Dwarves shut their doors and locked their gates, judging it wise to pass on that fight, stirring up the bad blood between themselves and the Elves. Only the accidental release of the horrific Balrog drove the Dwarves from their greatest home and refuge.

5.22 THE DWARVES OF THE IRON HILLS

All the while in the Iron Hills small numbers of Dwarves continue in the great Dwarvish tradition of mining for gold and silver, and hiding out. Small, broad, bearded folk with the night vision of a great-owl, Dwarves in the Iron Hills dress sensibly in heavy, sturdy boots (to protect their feet from sharp rocks) and leather jerkins and mail, sometimes flipping up great hoods for camouflage and protection from the elements. Most work as metalcrafters and miners, but of course some Dwarves travel to trade their crafts for necessary items - however, a Dwarf parts sadly with anything of value and always looks for a chance to get it back, for he believes that once he has made anything with his hands, it is **his**, forever.

Tied in with their faith in an afterlife, Dwarves take great care of their dead, laying them under stones engraved with runes sensible only to them. Put-upon by the world and put-down by the Elves, Dwarves are secretive both to protect themselves and to promote their own culture and positive self-image. Can you blame them?

5.3 THE NORTHMEN

Unlike the Elves and Dwarves of Northern Mirkwood, the Northmen have no rigid political system guiding their every step — their "social glue" has lost its stick. Akin to the lesser men of the Dúnedain (and long ago to the Edain, the noblest of men granted the unique privilege of co-mingling with the Elves in the Elder Days), these dark-haired, grey-eyed, husky outdoorsmen have turned their broad backs on the great cultural achievements of their ancestors, choosing instead an independent and clannish existence close to the soil and woods of the wilderness.

By mid-Third Age Northmen are no single unit or community of men: they have split by choice and live varying lifestyles and speak their own languages (although all speak the Common Speech) in regions as distinct and different as the hostile cold of the Grey Mountains' highlands to the more inviting grasslands of the Rhovanion plains (where the *Gramuz*, or "Grasslanders" have settled) and the hilly vales of the northern Anduin, near the Carrock where the *Beijabar* live.

5.31 THE BACKGROUND OF GONDOR'S OVERLORDS

Northmen trace their roots to the Edain of Elder Days, the first men and Second Born. In an unusual display of cross-cultural friendship, these loosely-associated tribes of men, after crossing the icy Blue Mountains, joined with the Elves of Beleriand in the First Age to learn their ways and battle Morgoth, everyone's worst enemy. Nearly exterminated, the Edain found their first great cultural hero in the person of Eärendil, who with the aid of a Silmaril sailed west to the undying Lands to persuade the Valar to help the Elves and men to overcome the mighty Morgoth. Eärendil himself never returned — some believe he sails the sky in a ship of mithril and Elven-glass — but with the assistance of the Valar, the coalition of Elves and men was victorious. As a reward for their valor, the Edain were granted the most westerly (and thus nearest to the Undying Lands) of mortal lands, the Isle of Elenna, which the men themselves called *Númenor.*

Guided by Eárendil's star, **most** of the Edain — later called the "High People" — sailed west and settled the island, prospering for 3,000 years of the Second Age. Although granted a life span as much as three times that of lesser men, the Númenoreans — or as the Elves called them, the *Dúnedain* (Men-of-the-west" in Quenya) — were not given the immortality they heartily desired. They did develop their own language, Adûnaic, based upon early Mannish speech influenced by the musical lilt of the Elves, a tongue that survived Númenor itself, and they built a culture of rare beauty and awesome sea-power. (Men who remained behind in Middle-earth — like the Northmen of Mirkwood and the Rhovanion plains — view Adûnaic as a snooty, quasi-Elvish tongue and speak their own Rhovanion dialect.)

Eventually the noble men of Númenor caused their own downfall, this fall from glory occurring after three millenia of ever-growing power and advancing civilization. The Ban of the Valar - the only restriction placed upon the ambitions of the Númenoreans, other than that of mortality itself - forbade travel west to the Undying Lands, home of the Valar and the West-elves. The Valar judged their prohibition as simply just and fair: after all, men are only mortal (or at **best**, half-Elven) and have no business knocking about immortal lands. To soften the blow, Elves visited Númenor frequently, teaching their folklore and sciences, encouraging the men to develop, among other things, a calendar that was in use for 6,000 years. (The Elven calendar of Imladris might have been a bit discouraging to mortals, its *yen* or "year" being equal to 144 solar years; thus an ancient sage, with luck, might live to the ripe old age of one or two.)

But the Elves' kindness and knowledge, rather than calming the men, inflamed twin passions growing within the Númenoreans: the desire for immortality and the conviction that they were as worthy of life everlasting as the Elves. After all, weren't some of the Númenorean kings half-Elven?

Thus Númenoreans, though long-lived, grew more ambitious, and their days of serene obedience were numbered. Some of their leaders thought they had to **move, and fast.**

Being avid students of the Elves' knowledge and power, the Númenoreans wanted a chance to test the might of the Valar - rather like children testing their parents will. But for most of the Second Age the more ambitious Númenorean leaders contented themselves with sailing east to Middle-earth, at first to aid the Elves against Sauron, the Black Eye of the Dark Tower, but later to conquer and subjugate the "lesser" men of Middle-earth, men who lacked the wisdom and knowledge of the Elves (and the power-lust of the Númenoreans). The imperialistic princes, some of whom were known as ***Black Númenoreans,*** seized the coastlands and established their own states; by S.A. 2251 Sauron the Dark Master had seduced a handful of them into an alliance and under the influence of the nine Rings of Mortal Men, they became his slaves, and made up the lion's share of the undead... Ringwraiths about whom much is later recorded.

Back in Númenor, the Kings of the star-shaped island grew increasingly bitter and arrogant: they deemed it an unbearable insult to age and die. In S.A. 2899 the eighteenth King of Númenor chose to call himself *Ar-Adûn a Khôr*, "Lord-of-the-West" in Adûnaic, the first time a Númenorean King had taken his name in the vernacular and not the official language of state, High-elvish. This affront to the Valar went unpunished, so Numenorean leaders only pushed harder, letting the ancient Elven tongues and traditions die as their own nationalistic desires arose.

In the third millenium of the Second Age, after a brief civil war and a cooling of anti-Eldarin sentiments, *Ar-Pharazôn the Golden* (Usurper) seized the sceptre of Númenor and in the year 3261, landed in Umbar with a fleet of warships. After conquering Sauron, who quickly and wisely surrendered to the self-inflated King, Ar-Pharazôn sailed triumphantly home, the Black Master his prisoner. Within three years of his capture the ever-beguiling Sauron had become counselor to the King and urged a reckless tack: he urged Ar-Pharazôn to break the Ban of the Valar, seize the Undying Lands and thus obtain everlasting life through force, as though immortality were a jewel to be seized like the Silmarils. (You see how persuasive Sauron is, that he was able to put this proposition to the King after three years of confinement and not be laughed out of court.) For nine years Ar-Pharazôn built up his forces and in S.A. 3319 he gathered his men and weapons and set sail west to challenge the Valar. No sooner had he and his men set foot on the shores of Aman than their hopes were crushed: Númenor sank like a stone under the sea, Ar-Pharazôn and his men were crushed, and the Undying Lands were moved to a realm beyond man's grasp. So much for the Númenoreans' demand for immortality. With the rise of recorded history, one would think the lesson of Sauron's treachery

would be taught to every new generation of men — but such is his power of persuasion that even wizards would later be fooled by the honey-tongued charmer.

Surviving the downfall of Númenor — inevitable if you look back at the Númenoreans' pride and aggressive instincts and the Valar's very nature — were a few of the Faithful led by Elendil the Tall. These men rejected the overweening pride of Ar-Pharazôn and his court and trusted Sauron almost as far as they could toss a Balrog, and in S.A. 3320 they sailed east to join their "lesser" brethren and to found the Númenorean realms-in-exile, Arnor and Gondor, bringing with them the cultural treasures of their great and now-lost civilization: a seedling of the White Tree, itself a descendant of the Eldest of Trees; the seven *palantiri*, the seeing-stones made by the Master Elven-Craftsman, Fëanor; and the Ring of Barahir, a symbol of the bond between Elf and Man from the good old days of the First Age. Of all the splendor and power of Númenor, only these things and the men themselves remained. Forever in decline was their language, Adûnaic; the Exiles spoke Sindarin and in later conversation with other men, the Common Speech. Nonetheless, the latter tongue owes much of its heritage to Adûnaic.

5.32 A BRIEF NORTHMAN HISTORY

Missing out on all this cultural growth, extraordinary life and disastrous death were the so-called "Middle Peoples" of the Edain, those men who remained in Middle-earth at the end of the First Age, among them the ancestors of the Northmen. More numerous and scattered than their illustrious brethren of Númenor, the Middle Peoples had seen their cultures grow more slowly; lacking the thrust of genius and the guidance of the Elves, they tended to be more mundane, more concerned with survival today than immortality tomorrow and forever. Yet the kinship between the two branches of men was genuine, and no one today can judge a Northman less noble in nature just because he dresses in skins and hides (as opposed to the ceremonial gowns and robes of Númenor), or because he speaks the common tongue — or his own Rhovanion speech — and not the more musical Elvish tongue. It seems the Middle Peoples hold in their hearts fewer regrets and a deeper sense of belonging to the vales and mountains and woods of Middle-earth, a conviction that escaped the Dúnedain even after the drowning of Númenor.

Thus, like the Elves, the men of Middle-earth were reunited, their two cultures beginning to blend as the door to the Third Age opens. from the Númenorean Exiles the Middle Peoples received the gifts of a higher culture: learning, traditions, myths and symbols, and a sense of history and destiny. Some of the Higher Men, after settling to the south and east of Mirkwood in Gondor, set out to ford the wide river of cultural differences between themselves and their less-schooled brethren; it seems obvious they had to lower their cultural expectations once in Middle-earth. Sadly, Gondor is, in T.A. 1640, a force on the downslide and after the recent Plague and the Gondor's Kinstrife (T.A. 1432-48), an ever-weakening foe to Sauron's ambitions. In exchange for the knowledge and wisdom of the Exiles in Gondor who first conquered the Northmen, then instructed them, the men of Northern Mirkwood and the Rhovanion plains stand as a wall opposed to any invasion from the east or north.

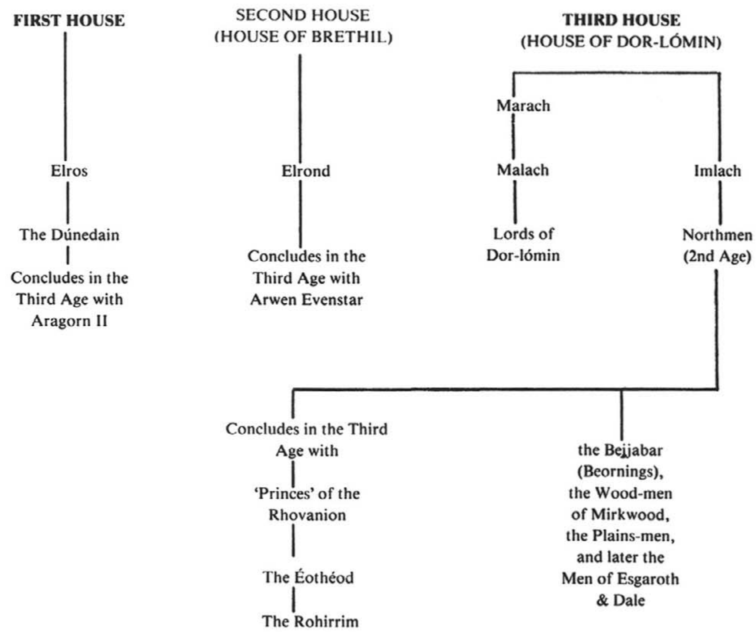
Thus, although the cultural differences between the Northmen and the men of Gondor are substantial and deeply-rooted, both groups possess the great gifts given all men in Middle-earth: free will, a sense of destiny and the belief in an after-life.

By the thirteenth century of the Third Age the men of Gondor and Northern Mirkwood were as close to being brethren as they were likely ever to be. In the 1300's, Vidugavia, another self-styled Northern prince, closely aligned himself with the royal house of Gondor to battle the Easterlings and with high aspirations, wed his daughter to Gondor's Prince Valacar. Their son Eldacar was rightful king of Gondor and half Northman; in their eyes, and in those of some Gondorians, esteem for the Northmen rose. But jealousy soon reared its ugly head in the courts of Gondor; a devastating civil war, the Kin-strife, broke out in 1432. Gondor was greatly weakened. Just two hundred years later, with Gondor resting peacefully but anemic, the Great Plague ravaged the cities of Gondor and decimated a generation of soldiers and citizens. Gondor and the Rhovanion plains now stood ripe for invasion and domination.

A Family Tree of the Edain

The Edain family tree bears three branches initially, two of which joined late in the Third Age when the handsome, heroic *Aragorn II*, who could claim descent from the Eldar, wed the half-Elven beauty *Arwen Evenstar* of the Second House. The Third House of Men split very early to produce on one limb the Lords of Dor-lómin, a part of the Elven Kingdom of Hithlum, and on the other, the *Northern Men*, including: the bear-like Beijabar (later the Beornings), the nomadic Wood-men of Mirkwood, the Plains-men of the Rhovanion, and later the Men of Esgaroth and Dale. Another line of the Northern Men branch leads from the self-proclaimed Princes of the Rhovanion, including Vidugavia, to the Éothéod, to the Rohirrim, the blond, horse-loving Riders of Rohan.

THE EDAIN (Men of the Three Houses of Elf-friends)



5.33 DAILY LIFE AMONG THE NORTHMEN

But the Northmen spend very little of their time considering the affairs of state; like men everywhere, they must live out their lives in a daily struggle to make a viable life for themselves and their families. More peculiar to the Northman is the willingness to do battle — with the elements or any foe who might challenge his might or right. Northmen are willing to fight to the finish to protect their land, their families and their clans; the Eothraim believe that in battle a warrior dies a sacred death and that he passes on to feast and fight forever in the halls of their ancestors. (Of course some Northmen — the traders and settlers called the Gramuz — are less inclined to fight although just as capable of mayhem, for Northmen tend to be broad, strong, tall and very hard-working.)

A typical Northman's settlement on the Rhovanion plains is sure to involve a group of fenced-in buildings: including a cottage with a loft that acts as a home, and a stable for chickens, pigs, sheep or cattle and oxen, and perhaps a horse. In his loft the Northman stores hay, grain and fruit; on the ground floor he keeps barrels of home-brewed beer, tubs of salted fish and meat, and his smithing and carpentry tools and farm implements. The family lives in a larger room, eating and sleeping communally; the Northwoman may have a simple wooden loom to weave woolen shirts and gowns.

A Northman's family learns to tell time by the season's chores as well as the weather. In the fall, oxen plough the fields to cultivate the soil; the family threshes the harvest grain into hive-like domes of wheat. In winter, the chores are fewer, for winter in Northern Mirkwood can be long, cold and dark; Northmen slaughter cows and pigs and repair fences and any other damage or undue weathering done to buildings and tools. In spring, ploughing and sowing rye, wheat, peas, beans and corn take up the bulk of the family's time. Weeding is done all the while by the children, and in summer, after more ploughing, comes the hay and corn harvest — and celebrations if the harvest is good (for if it isn't, hard times are sure to follow).

A hard and unrelenting life — that's what the Northman expects. And that's just what he gets.

5.4 OTHER INHABITANTS

Some of the seedier inhabitants of Northern Mirkwood include raiding bands of orcs and trolls, and in the Grey Mountains, giants and dragons who call the icy wastes of the northern wilderland 'home.' To put in a nice word for trolls, who have gotten some bad press, trolls do **not** only kill and mutilate and devour cute little ponies. They sing songs — if you can call a gravel-voiced, grunting ditty about torture and bloodshed a 'song' — tunnel and mine as well as Dwarves and employ "explosives." Not bad for ten-foot tall pea-brains made of stone.

Orcs in the region are as handsome and charming as black-blooded, red-eyed orcs anywhere, with the exception of Sauron's Uruk-hai, or Great Orcs. Blinded by the sun (and no doubt startled by a mirror), Orcs either work themselves to death as slaves or fight as very expendable soldiers. Bloodthirsty beyond measure, they are unique — for they fight with flashy curved scimitars; and if they accidentally hack off a fellow Orc's limb, the injured Orc is likely to say (in a dialect that no one but his tribe cal understand): 'Hey, that's okay! I have another!'

What an odd mix of beings Mirkwood holds. Haughty Elves, secretive Dwarves and the various bands and clans of Northmen, none of whom has much to do with each other (although some Northmen are friendly with the men of Gondor). Even a Hobbit or two — Stoors come from the vales of the Anduin — may be seen slipping through the underbrush before disappearing.

With its great natural gifts of forest, rivers and mountains, Northern Mirkwood offers the rustic pleasures men and other folk find enjoyable and challenging, shunning as they do the city lights of Osgiliath, Gondor's capital. But for the occasional invasion or pestilence or ill wind from the East, Northern Mirkwood is an hospitable host to all. As a region, as a living biosystem, it survives and thrives on paradox, at once wild and yet in parts nearly tamed. A land of woods and vales and grassy plains, it is a mountainous wilderland. And most, Northern Mirkwood is home to all manners of beings and folk, most of whom seldom see each other — and are glad of it.

6.0 POLITICS AND POWER (T.A. 1640)

Northern Rhovanion is much too wild and sparsely-populated a region to form a viable political state like Gondor, or to erect a lasting dynasty of rulers. The powerful, closely-knit society of Wood-elves at Thranduil's Caverns possesses all the tools of domination and dominion except desire: the clannish Northmen — loosely confederated by Vidugavia in the 13th century — have split into splinter-groups who mind their own business in the mountains, woods and plains of Rhovanion and ask only to be left alone to fish, hunt, tend their animals, grow their crops and to some small extent, trade with Thranduil's Elves and the Men of the East. Whatever drive toward union and unity that existed before the Great Plague was thoroughly squelched by the gruesome suffering and death which raced from trading settlement to clan to family with dizzying, deadly speed. Always independent and distrustful of outsiders, the post-Plague Northman, after fleeing to the Grey Mountains or a similarly unpopulated region to avoid the pestilence, probably returned home more convinced than ever that society **in itself** is a dangerous and unrewarding notion whose time was yet to come. He must have cast an evermore jaundiced eye south towards Osgiliath, once Gondor's fairest city — which now stands as a shaky, half deserted ruin, most of its residents dead.

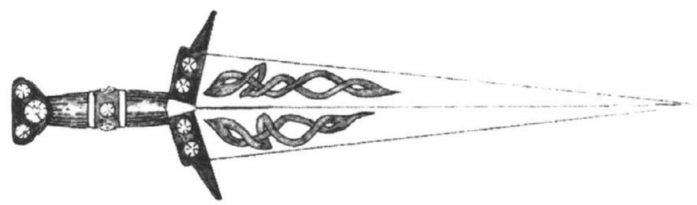
One obvious exception to the Northmen's anti-societal sentiments is the trading community rebuilding itself on the shores of the Long Lake, where Lake Town would later arise. Here, entrepreneurs built and maintained a center for the exchange of hides and Elven-goods from the West for the highly-admired wines of the East. Built upon barter and banter, the community flourished so long as all groups carried on good relations and the sleepy dragons of the Iron Hills dozed on. Ideally located at the meeting of two rivers and upon the shore of a calm, wide lake, the trading center might have quickly grown into a bustling village but for three strokes of doom: the spread of the Plague, the growing threat of invasion from the East and most importantly, the long-fallen Shadow of Sauron (which had soured and darkened the fruits of the forest for the past six centuries).

Thus in 1640, Northern Rhovanion is in flux, men scattered about and distrustful of each other and everyone else, the Wood-elves secure in their own kingdom but uninterested in anything and anyone else, and the Dwarvish population — however small — no doubt holed up in their comfortable underground halls, forging swords and axes and things of beauty, awaiting their time to rise and act. One wonders what might have happened had Thranduil's Elves shared their knowledge of the healing arts with the Northmen; could the Northmen have survived in sufficient numbers to prevent the onslaught of the Wainriders two hundred years hence? We will never know. But perhaps even the medicine and leechcraft of Gondor of the Elves could not have prevailed over the devastating effects of the Plague, which subsided only when enough people and their beasts died, and the deadly germ could no longer spread from population to population. Unfortunately, the ravage of the Plague sowed ever more widely the seeds of distrust and disunity in the already-richly-suspicious soil of Northern Mirkwood.

Only Thranduil, the Elven-king of Northern Mirkwood for most of two Ages, possesses the power and vision to unite and lead the Men of the region, and he is concerned first and solely with his own people, preparing them to meet the forces of Darkness in a struggle he knew to be inevitable. (Thranduil easily read the signs of Darkness' encroachment over the past centuries.) While understanding Thranduil's pride — Elves are the First-Born, the Immortals — one wishes he possessed something like empathy for the 'lesser' beings around him; united, men and Elves might have much more easily discouraged and rerouted Sauron's forces, if not prevailed over them decisively.

The Princes of the Rhovanion — originally that part of Middle-earth stretching east of the Misty Mountains to the River Running — have ruled their little principalities since the 1200's. Once Gondor held domain over the plains and guarded them with her mighty armies, but now the Rhovanion rulers find themselves on their own as its conqueror struggles simply to survive. Back in the thirteenth century, Vidugavia, the greatest of these princes, organized the Northmen into a loosely-centralized government that worked for a while; however, it seems likely that the powerful clans gathered along the Vales of the Anduin and in the Grey Mountains paid little attention to the self-proclaimed monarch. It is simply not in the nature of a Northman to submit himself to a higher authority. (The Northman views government much as he viewed the Plague — as something to be avoided at all costs.) The greatest accomplishment of the princes was to inadvertently cause the Kin-strife in Gondor that led to the weakening of men everywhere and opened Mirkwood to invasion by the Easterlings.

Thus Northern Rhovanion, once and always a sprawling, sparsely-settled land, remains essentially unchanged at the time of our concern: men and Elves eye each other with suqpicion and tend solely to their own needs and desires; scattered enclaves of Dwarves hide away in the Iron Hills; while along the eastern and southern borders of the forest, gathering forces of Darkness loom and threaten. Battle is inevitable — and all too near.



7.0 PLACES OF NOTE (T.A. 1640)

Largely a wilderness area, Northern Rhovanion has no dominant center of population and culture, no looming fortress perched upon a mountain top, no boundaried and protected Shire. It is a land open to settlement and invasion, a land caught in a tug of war between the magic of the Elves and the forces of Sauron.

This is not to say that no one lives here; Rhovanion is hardly a wasteland. In Thranduil's age-old caverns (built with the aid of Dwarves), Wood-elves work their magic and guard the eastern gate to the forest and the lands of the West. In small numbers, Northmen have settled the rich plains of Rhovanion and along the banks of the Anduin, but in an unplanned, decentralized manner.

7.1 SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

At Long Lake, some kind of trading community arose and in 1640, continues to thrive, although the recent Plague no doubt closed down commerce for a year or two as men fled west or north to the Grey Mountains. Much further south, under the Shadow of Dol Guldur, the Wizard Radagast talks to the animals — who no doubt listen and reply — as he has for centuries. In the Iron Hills, small numbers of Dwarves hoard their gold and silver and weapons and keep their secrets, awaiting the passing of men and the arrival of their turn to dominate and rule. But absent is the single Allseeing Overlord guiding the scattered movements of men, Elves and Dwarves through and around the 'black and frowning wall' of Mirkwood's borders (*Hobbit*, Chapter 7). Here, it's every man for himself.

The Wood-elves domain, though underground, is no Troll-hole or Goblin-town. The rocky passages are well-lighted and not so deep and dank as cruder caves; the air is fresher and cleaner, as the unwary wanderer is soon to learn. Once captured — and eluding or tricking the Wood-elves in

their own territory is highly unlikely — the tight-lipped adventurer is shackled and marched (to the sound of an Elven-tune, most likely) over a bridge, up a steep stairway, across a grassy threshold, through great doors of stone that close magically and down spiraling passages to stand before the King in his throne-room. (Whew!)

In the great hall of the King stand pillars cut from living stone; the flower-crowned King sits on a chair of carved wood before the towering columns and haughtily dispenses his own brand of Elven-justice, which tends to be blind and quick. From the throne-room the prisoner is led down to one of at least twelve cells in different parts of the palace and locked behind strong wooden doors. Escape without the use of some kind of magic is next to impossible. However, the underground river, which flows neatly through a tunnel beneath some of the holding cells, is barred only by a water gate and an arched portcullis, or iron grating, which can be raised or lowered at will. So take heart, captured wanderer; eat and drink and lay your plans!

Less threatening to the stranger is a typical settlement of the Northmen, those proud and hearty Mountain-men and Wood-men akin to the lesser men of the Dúnedain. Living alone or in small clans, these hunters, fishermen and lumberjacks battle the elements in regions as inhospitable as the icy ridges of the Grey Mountains, some settling near the origins of the Anduin and the Forest Rivers. Others drift down to the Vales of the Anduin; and some come to the Carrocks, great weathered boulders that offer natural protection near the bounty of the River. (*The Carrock,* a holy site of the Beijabar, is the greatest of these river-stones.) Unencumbered by society, these men of the wilderness live out their lives in low, dark cabins with no companions but the immediate family, perhaps a goat, a pig and some sheep, and only the occasional visitor (most likely a nomad or a refugee of the Plague returning to his home from a mountain-refuge).

Plains-dwelling Northmen, a different breed, have settled east of the forest to farm and raise livestock while near the Long Lake, a small trading community has sprung up. Here, where two rivers empty into the Lake, men barter furs for comestibles, trade tall tales and catch up on the latest news. More comfortable than their mountain cousins, the plains-dweller owns and maintains a group of thatched and rough-hewn log-buildings, including a tool shed, a smokehouse, and barns and stables for sheep, cattle, pigs and hens. To protect his family and livestock and to declare his boundaries, he has probably built a low wooden fence around his farm, and might keep a dog or two to bark out warnings and tend the sheep.

Inside the family home — not much more than a large wood-beamed room with a loft — are the simple necessities of life: platforms to act as table-top and bed-bottom, a few crude benches, and the only source of heat and light (but for a few candles), a central fireplace. Outside, facing south, stands a roofed veranda looking out onto the family vegetable and flower gardens. The industrious family might also tend beehives and grow malt and barley for ale. People sleep upon straw mattresses and cover themselves with rough, woolen blankets; in the Winter of 1635-36, when the Great Plague hit, the nearness of man and beast — huddled together for warmth — spread the contagion faster than ever.

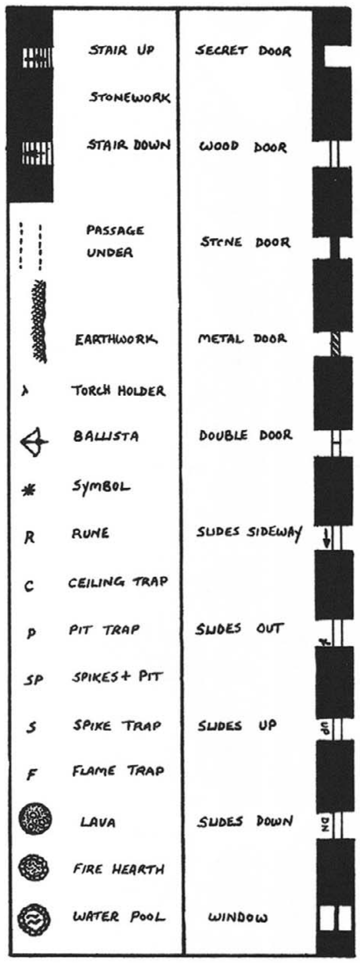
No doubt some clans group themselves together for protection and build around their settlements a fortress of concentric earthen ramparts, oval in shape; these walls of roughly-shaped mud and dirt can stand for centiries. Rimming the approach to the earthworks is a field of jagged rocks, a barrier to incursion and more than a hindrance to cattle-thieves.

Far south of the Old Forest Road and east of the Anduin is the forest-home of Radagast the Brown, Rhosgobel. Here the Wizard communes with the beasts and birds of Mirkwood, tending to their needs. His concern is touching, but Radagast's seeming disregard of the human suffering around him — especially at the height of the Plague's deadly power in 1636 — makes him something less than a totally admirable magic-man. perhaps he viewed his mission as insuring the survival of the forest of Mirkwood itself, which was withering under Sauron's haze at nearby Dol Guldur. Radagast was very likely powerless to aid the Northmen directly. One pictures Rhosgobel as a glittering, well-lighted (perhaps by fireflies the size of your fist) carnival of chattering birds and beasts, and the only truly happy place in a forest that for six hundred years has born a shadow and the ominous name of "Mirkwood."

The Dwarves of the Iron Hills remained small in number (until the fall of Moria); these superb metalsmiths may have come to the Lonely Mountain to mine and in some sense worship long ago, when they helped Thranduil carve his Elven-kingdom in Mirkwood, but little is really known. No doubt the Dwarves' subterranean lodgings are elaborate and artistic, but little is said about their presence in Thranduil's region until the founding of Erebor in 1999. Mystery surrounds the Khazâd as surely as gold dust, and we shall leave it at that.

7.2 SIGNIFICANT LAYOUTS

KEY FOR OVERHEAD LAYOUTS (E.G. FLOORPLANS)



CELEBANNON

A small Elven village composed entirely of wooden cabin-like structures with thatched roofs, Celebannon is yet a town of some elegance, as are all places graced by the Immortals. All of the structures are extremely well made, with subtle decoration, and a modest grace which whispers of comfort and veiled beauty within. There is but one inn in the village, implying perhaps that there is not much in the way of revelry done here. Be not deceived, however, for often there is feasting in the Ohtar's Hall nestled within the trees, open only to residents and their guests.

KEY TO CELEBANNON

Residences. (a,b,d,e,i,j,k) Each of these single-story structures houses at least one (depending on the size of the structure) extended family unit.

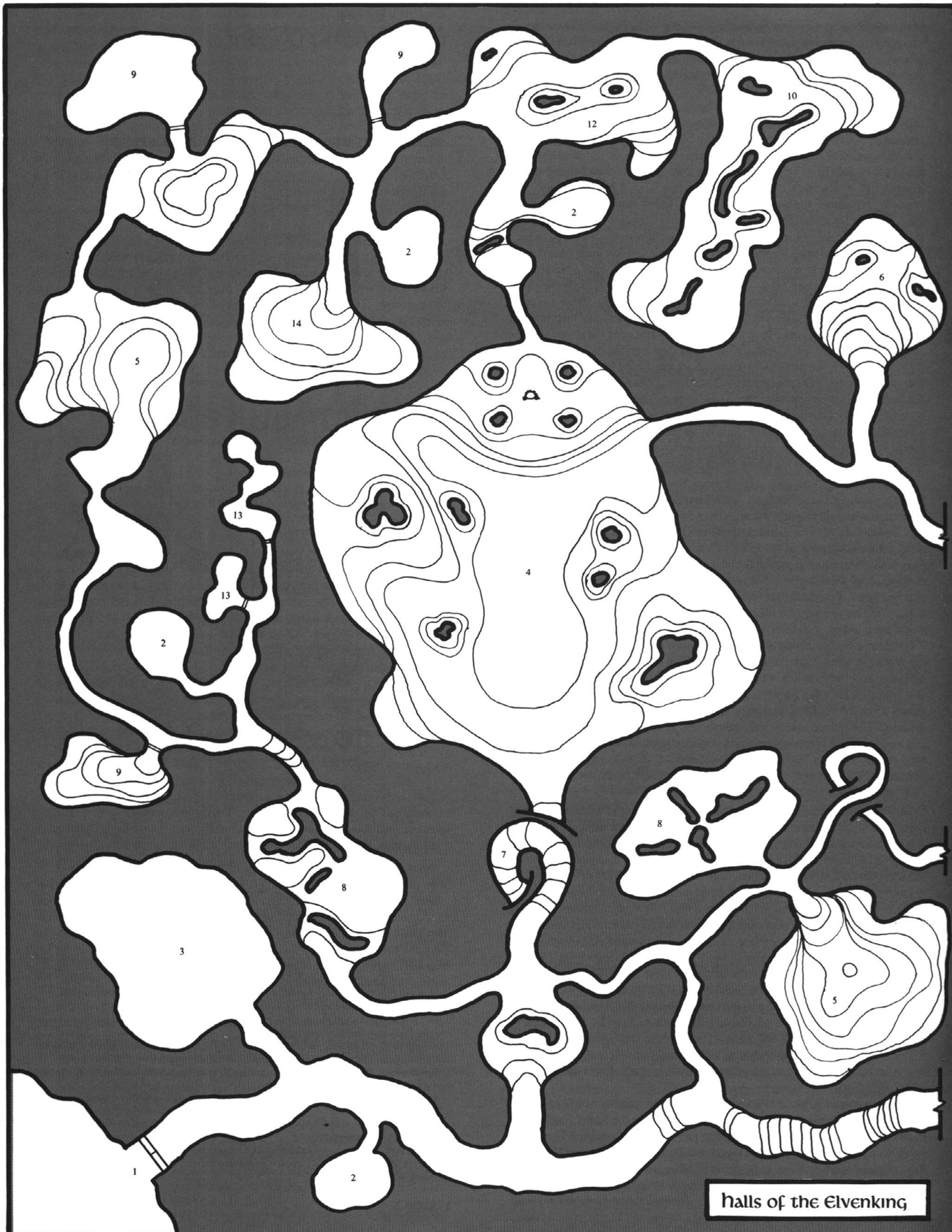
Storage Halls. (c,f,h) These are holding areas for the various goods traded by the Elves. Many barrels are also stored here, as well as the light boats during bad weather.

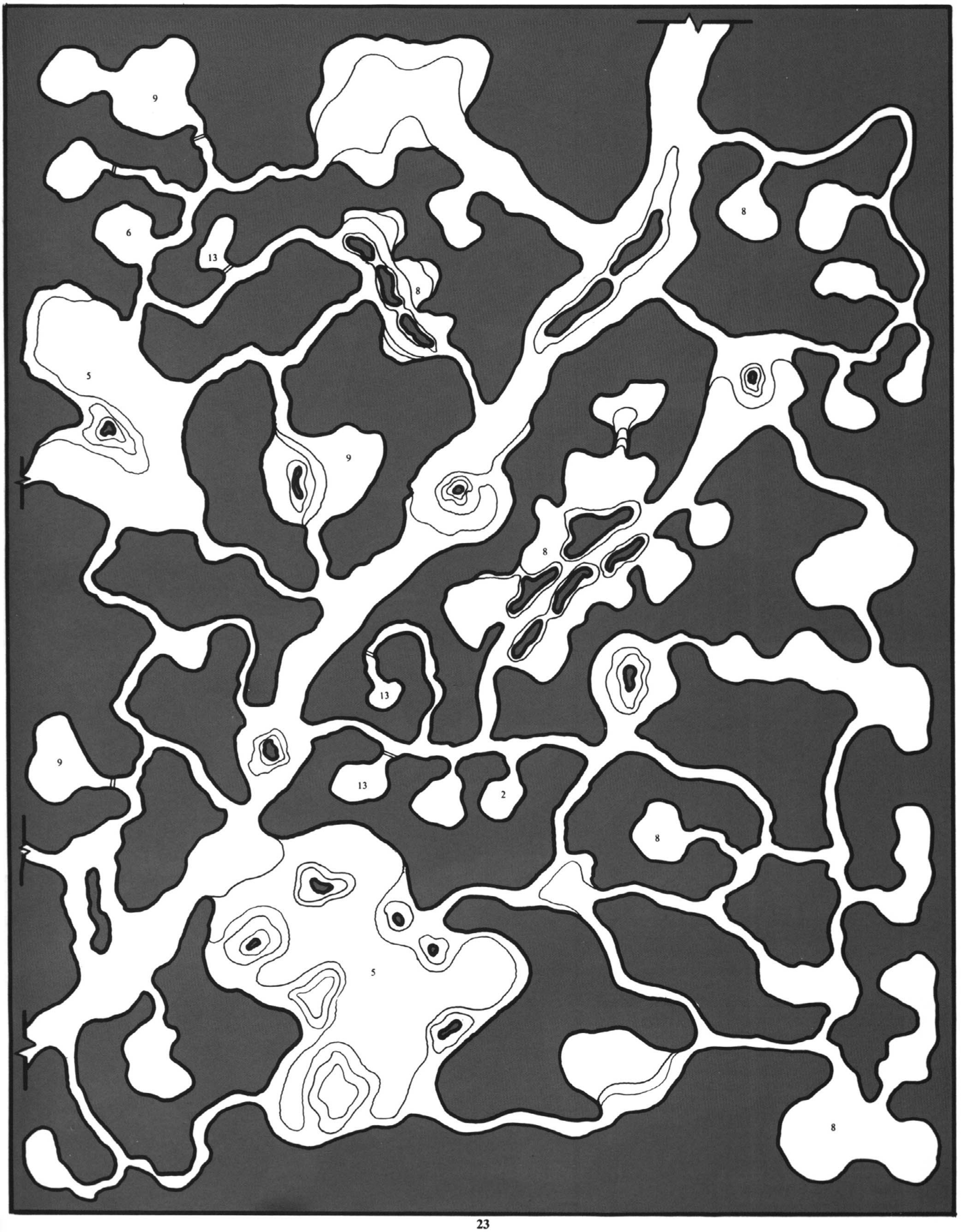
Inn (Dindraug, "Silent Wolf"). (g) The only inn in Celebannon, it is quiet but comfortable, and the prices are reasonable, and the food excellent.

Trading Hall. (l) A relatively large, circular structure, the trading hallis just what its name indicates. The walls of the building are movable, so that a great precentage of its circumference can be opened to the outdoors during fair weather. This is the general marketplace for the villagers, as well as a trading post for travellers.

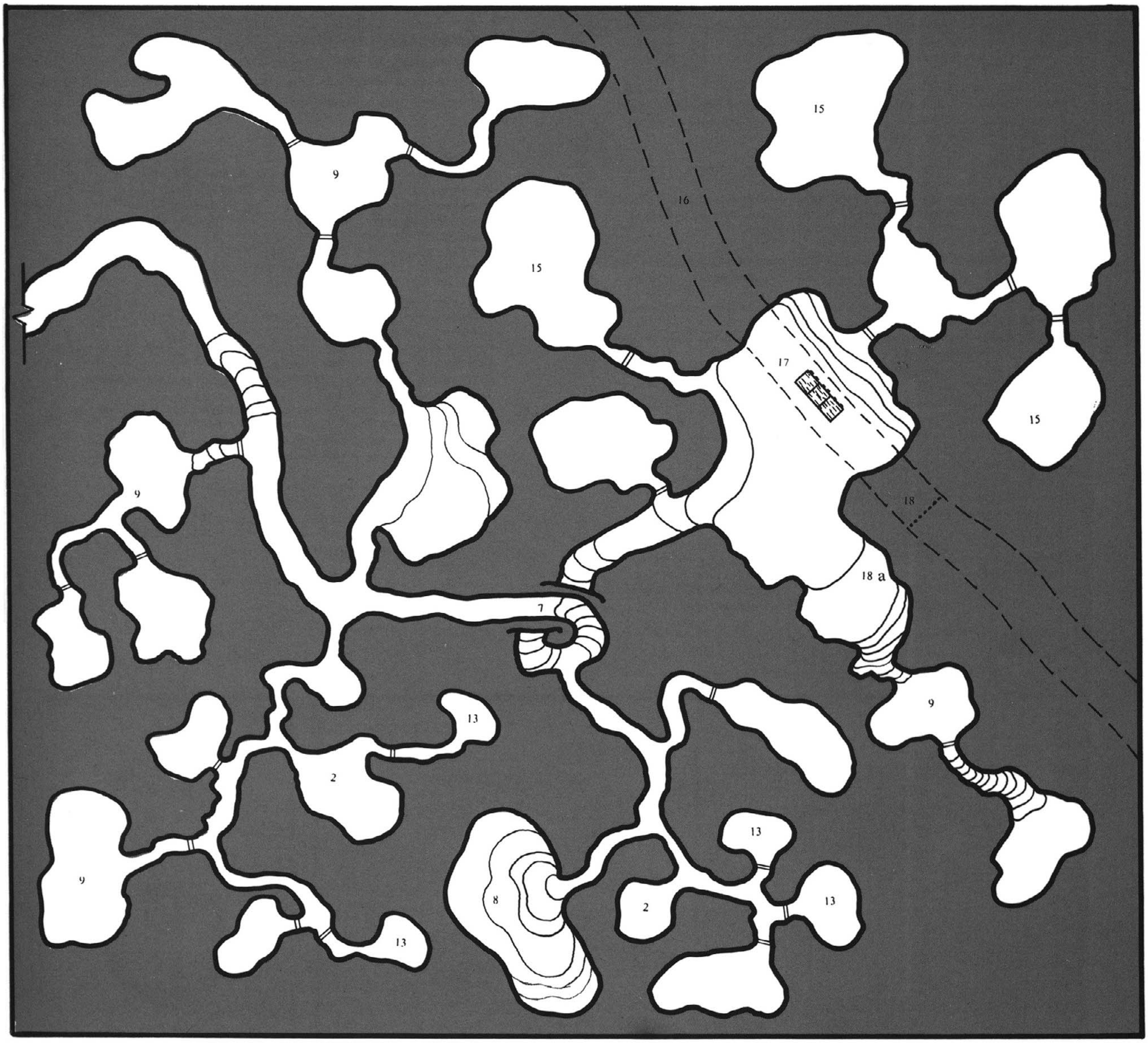
Ohtar's Hall. (m) A two-story building which encloses a feasthall and kitchens on the first floor, as well as the Ohtar and his guard's quarters on the second floor, accessed by a balcony running the perimeter of the interior.

NOTE: *The layout for Celebannon is on the color insert.*


halls of the Elvenking
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Halls of the Elvenking
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THE ELVEN-KING'S HALLS

It is interesting to note that, despite their diametrically opposed attitudes toward the design of underground dwellings, both Elves and Dwarves are able to create grand halls of grace and beauty. The Elves prefer to work from natural cavern formations, altering as little as possible, and designing their homes purely within the framework already available, created (usually) by underground river flows long before. The Elves make use of the sloping, uneven floors; the towering stalagmites and smooth, rounded, tapering pillars of limestone to their advantage, adding only decorative carving, beautiful hangings, both for room division and decoration, and of course many lamps, of every imaginable design. The Halls of Thranduil, the Elven-king of Mirkwood, are no exception. The complex is literally a maze of interconnecting tunnels and rooms which wind, spiral, and turn back on themselves. Floors and corridors slope and bend; and often footing (for the unwary) is uncertain, and the way dangerous.

After reading this one might think that these halls are cold and damp, having himself perhaps visited natural caves; but this is not true. Thranduil's home is warm and filled with light. Bright tapestries hang all about, and there are soft carpets spread about many of the rooms, as well as many cushions and other furnishings. Indeed, the appointments here are far superior in quality to those found in most any king's hall.

KEY TO THE ELVEN-KING'S HALLS

Note that the contour lines in the caverns slope down from the walls and columns (columns being designated by the shaded areas bordered by heavy black line) towards the open areas of the room. Thus, the lowest area in Thranduil's Hall is the "Y" shaped region in the center of the room. The floor then slopes up in gentle steps to the perimeter and around the gracefully tapering columns. The contours in the corridors usually indicate a continuous slope rather than steps, except where there are spiral stairs. There are few real 'doors' in the Halls; rather the Elves prefer hangings to cover entries. There are doors, of strong wood bound with iron, barring the cells, storerooms, cellars, and of course, Thranduil's vaults.

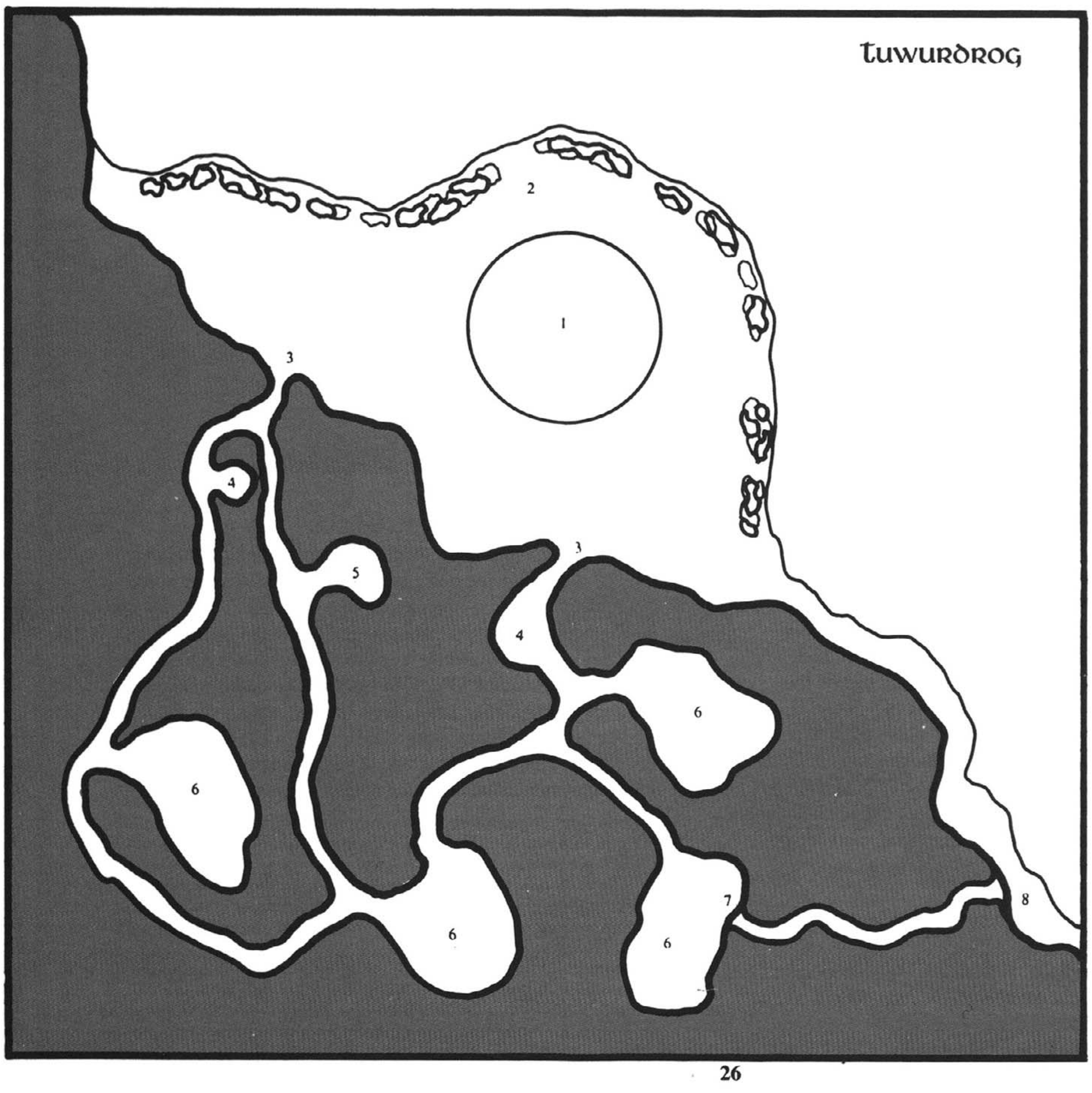
1. **Great Gates.** Across a long stone bridge spanning the Forest River, up a steep stair, and across a grassy court are the stone doors which guard the entry to Thranduil's halls. The gates themselves are fifteen feet high and thirty wide, sliding apart on cunningly designed tracks in the floor and ceiling. Normally opening only at the command of one of the citizens of the city, they can also be set by the King to open at only his word, done in times of great danger. A foot thick, and wrought with many enchantments, they provide a formidable defense.
2. **Guardroom.** Manned at all times by two Elven-guards, the shifts are four hours long. The changeovers are staggered so that no more than three guard shifts are made at one time.
3. **Stable.** Herein are kept the light steeds of the King and his men. The three dozen fine light horses, tamed by the Elves, are unafraid of living underground. Primarily they are used to bear couriers and for hunting trips.

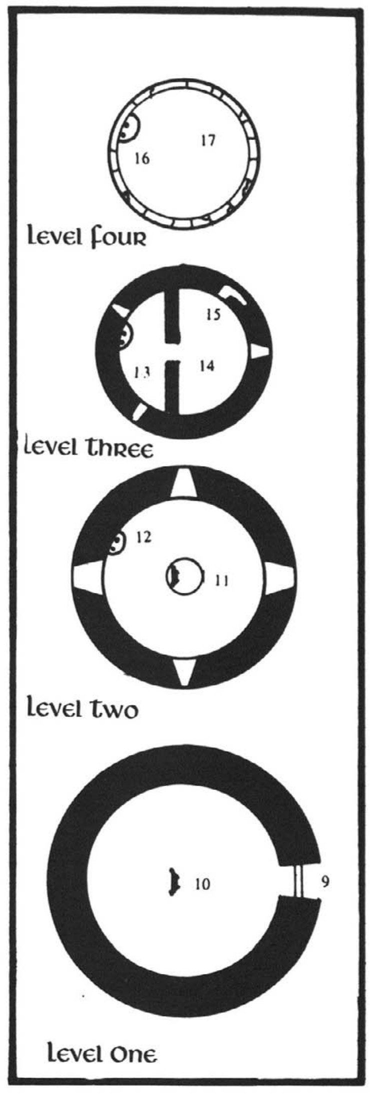
4. **Thranduil's Hall.** The main feast-hall and grandest chamber in all the complex, this is where the Elven-king holds court. Sitting in his throne carved and inlaid with many fine woods, he wears a crown of leaves reflecting the season, and bears a staff of carved oak. Rich tapestries depicting forest scenes cover the walls, and bright lamps hang from the walls and pillars of natural stone.
5. **Feast Hall.** Actually these rooms are multi-purpose in nature. In addition to serving as additional drinking and dining rooms, these chambers are natural gathering places for the residents to sing, play musical instruments (the harp and lute being favorites), create beautiful items of cloth and wood, or just spin tales.
6. **Kitchens.**
7. **Spiral Stair.** These are stepped stairways curving around under themselves, usually in several turns. The arrow points downslope.
8. **Living Quarters.** These areas are often subdivided by heavy tapestries and wood screens for added privacy. The Elves utilize the level changes and stalagmites as natural room dividers, and work around them to create individualized spaces.
9. **Storage.**
10. **Thranduil's Quarters.** The most elegant quarters in the complex, the King's chambers are filled with the most beautiful rugs and tapestries, as well as many gold and crystal lamps, filling the area with warm light.
11. **Library.** The main records area of the caverns, where many books and scrolls telling of Elven history, as well as many songs and other lore, are kept.
12. **Council Chamber.** Within this secure room Thranduil consults with his closest advisors regarding matters of import to the Halls.
13. **Cell.** These are "holding areas" to confine prisoners of the King. All are closed with heavy oaken doors with strong locks.
14. **Thranduil's Vaults.** Within these rooms are kept the treasury of Thranduil. Perhaps not large by the standards of the Elven-lords of Beleriand long ago, this hoard is still one of considerable wealth, including much gold, as well as many gems and items magical in nature. There are such things as great Elven blades forged in the Undying Lands long ago, long bows of superior quality, and magical items of all kinds.
15. **Cellar.** The many barrels of food and drink used by the populace of the Halls are stored in these rooms. Contents include apples, butter, and of course fine wines.
16. **Underground Stream.** This watercourse flows swiftly down to meet the Forest River beyond the Halls.
17. **Trapdoor.** In this chamber there is a trapdoor across the floor which can be lifted, exposing an open area of the stream. It is through this aperture that the emptied barrels are dropped, to flow down the river, and eventually to Lake Town for re-use.
18. **Portcullis.** An open wood grating, it allows the water to pass freely while holding back the dumped barrels until they are ready to be released. The rope to raise the portcullis is at 18a.

TUWURDROG: an Orcish citadel

Actually the ruin of a First Age orc-hold, Tuwurdrog is composed of a dilapidated tower, a small cave complex, all surrounded by an unmortared wall and perched on a granite outcrop along the southern edge of a small lake.

1. **The Tower.** See numbers 9-16 for details.
2. **Wall.** Of unmortared rough stones, about four feet high.
3. **Cave entries.** Very narrow on the outside, they gradually widen as one proceeds inward.
4. **Guardposts.** One orc on duty at each at all times. Shifts are every six hours.
5. **Armory.** Basically spare scimitars, a few short bows, and eight sets of poorly made reinforced leather armor.
6. **Living quarters.** Very crude, dirty and smelly.
7. **Secret Door.** Not very well made, –20 to detection attempts. A long winding passage leads to an exit (#8) hidden from the enclosed area and leading away from the lake.
9. **Door to the Tower.** Crudely made, as it was a recent addition (the original having long ago rotted to dust), the door is still strong, with a heavy wood bar that can be secured across it on the inside.
10. **First Floor.** This room is basically a meeting and feasting chamber for the orc warriors when there is an occasion for such. There is a hole in the center of the ceiling, and a ladder provides access to the second level (the wooden spiral stair once there also having disintegrated over the centuries).
11. **Second Floor.** There are four windows, arrow slits actually, spaced evenly abut the perimeter of the room. This area serves as Cro's "office".
12. **Ladder.** Leads to the third level.
13. **Outer room.** Two guards are always on duty, in six-hour shifts. A heavy curtain hangs across the door to #14.
14. **Cro's quarters.** A stinking hole by most standards, Cro's room is superior to any others at Tuwurdrog.
15. **Secret door.** Good construction, hard –20 to locate. It holds Cro's treasury: 120 gp, 287 sp, 500 bp; a +15 sword, a +10 shield, and a bracelet which allows the wearer to see under water, even in the murkiest lakes, to 100' clearly.
16. **Ladder.** To roof.
17. **Roof.** Ringed by a three foot high wall, the roof is otherwise an unbroken surface.





SARN GORIWING

The great black *Sarn Goriwing* (S. Abhorrent Spray's Stone) is a solitary, ninety foot spire of glassy igneous rock. It is reached only by air or across the violent waters just above the *Goriwing*. The main gate faces southward, and is set into a notch in the sloping "back" of the rock, only five feet above the water level.

Main Gate: Black iron doors inlaid with alternating spiral designs of gold and silver mark this opening. Each door is but three feet wide and only six feet in height. They slide sideways into the rock along metal tracks. There are two locks: (1) two great metal "arms" which look like the limbs of a dragon are affixed to the back of each door and can pivot and slide into holes in the opposing panel, enabling the "claws" to lock the doors together and prevent door movement; and (2) two huge metal bars which slide down into the wall slots on either side of the doors, precluding any opening. The arms are manually operated by the guard, while the bars are lowered by levers beside Lhachglin's bed and throne or by rapid movement across the stone set into the entry hall just inside the door.

Entry Hall: This oval chamber is thirty feet long and spans fifteen feet at its widest point. The eighteen foot dome ceiling is covered with glittering shards of black obsidian. A large, red ruby and corundum mosaic of the Lidless Eye dominates the dome's center (it's worth approx. 2,000 gp). The floor is covered with red marble octagons trimmed with enruned black marble. The small gold runes are 6th level Symbols of Fear which will not affect Lhachglin's household guard. The octagonal slab inside the gate is also dangerous, for it can control the bars which block the exit; should more than one cross the stone, or if someone moves across its surface at a rate faster than 3 mph, the lock bars will fall. Two 6' x 6' x 6' guard chambers open directly onto the entry hall. Each is occupied by a *fuglurg* (Or. "Lesser Group") of orcs: one 3rd and two 2nd level Uruk-hai. The entry hall is sometimes called the *Iant Úmarthen* (S. "Bridge of the Ill-fated"). It opens onto the complex's **third level.**

Level One: Located just above the water-level at the base of the Goriwing, this level serves as the keep's primary living area. Great windows look out northward at the cascading Enchanted River (*Gulduin*), while smaller, magical, transparent stones afford a southward view of the bottom of the lake upstream above the falls.

The kitchens and store rooms are located on the south side of the level and occupy half the tower's base. A Great Hall, with paneled walls of finely-worked wood fills the north side. The light entering the vast north windows illuminates this twenty foot high chamber. Rich carpeting made from the fur of bears covers most of the silvery stone floor. The coats-of-arms of the Northman groups Lhachglin has destroyed line the upper portions of the walls. Wrought-iron fire-pots provide any necessary heating; but generally the Master of the Falls enjoys the cold drafts. Passage to level two is accomplished by way of stairs set into the outer wall on the tower's east side.

The kitchens and store rooms are crude in appearance, being nothing but chambers hewn out of the Sarn and unembellished. Nonetheless, the three wonderous "viewing ports" which gaze northward through ninety feet of enchanted rock to reveal the watery world of Lhachglin's Lake more than make up for the lack of decor.

Level Two: This level is occupied by the Throne Hall, the tower's ceremonial chamber. Here Lhachglin sits in his "Living Throne" made from a live tree of some perverse nature. The tree itself will grab (Large Grapple + 100) and strangle (H. Crush + 100) anyone but the Master unless given specific orders to the contrary. Only Lhachglin seems its friend. The tree can also move its abbreviated branches to shield the foul animist, adding 50 to his combat defense and 20 to his RR.

Before the throne sits the *Forest Orb*, a green viewing stone three feet in diameter and set into the blue marble floor. It can rotate to allow the user to view any part of Mirkwood, aside from Dol Guldur and certain guarded Elven refuges (e.g. Amon Thranduil). Unfortunately for most, the stone can only be used by one who sits in the throne. The Forest Orb operates by mental command and can see views only "as one would view them from a nearby vantage point." It cannot see spaces "fully illuminated by the natural light of day," and works best at night or in intense shadows. The user can also focus power and make a mental attack on any one sighted trespasser who is within 300 yards of the Sarn (usable but three times per day at user's level). The attack is akin to a Word of Death, or optionally, a Word of Sleep.

The Throne Hall has a twenty-four foot ceiling which is criss-crossed with arches of silvery wood. The walls and floors are of blue marble and are covered with tapestries depicting hideous scenes of rotting forests and swamps. A door in the north wall leads to the stair which winds down to level one or up to level three (the main entry level). Another exit, behind the throne, opens onto a narrow stair which winds up to the sixth level above. This course may only be taken if the tree throne is in its "shield mode" — i.e. has its branches closed, concealing the exit to an outside viewer.

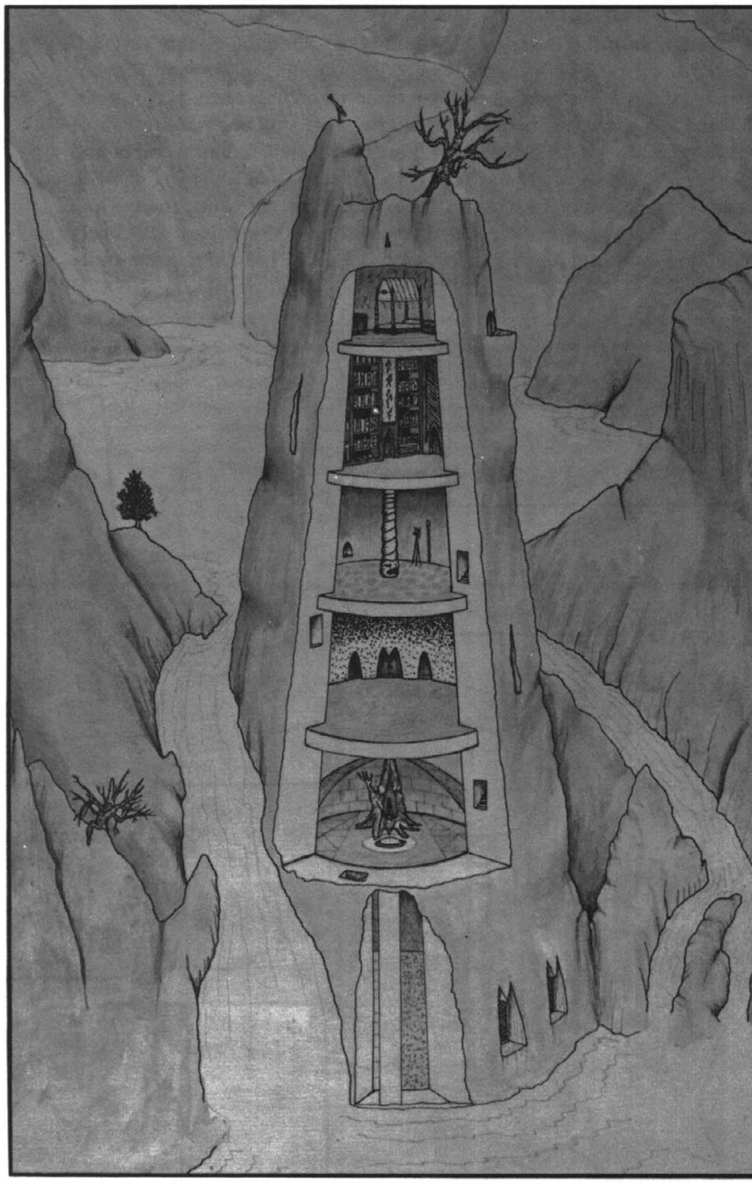
Level Three: Entry level. This level is a large greeting chamber of black and grey marble with an eighteen foot high ceiling. It has three accompanying guard rooms, each set into the exterior tower walls and occupied by two third level Uruk-hai. Three other doors grace the south side of the level: facing them, the center one opens onto the entry hall; the one on the right leads to a stair winding up to level four; and the one on the left enters onto the stairway to the levels below. These three doors are all iron and are kept super-heated (400 degrees) by way of internal steam shafts leading down to the kitchen.

Level Four: Guard halls cover this level. Here live the remaining orcs of the garrison: five 5th, four 3rd, and eight 2nd level Uruk-hai. There are no fine furnishings; the orcs live in the usual goblin-squalor, amid fetid things and refuse. The walls, ceiling and floors are of the uncovered stone of the Sarn. Wet straw covers the floor, and water troughs abound. The ceiling is fifteen feet high.

Level Five: This area houses the library, study and laboratory of Lhachglin. The entry is onto the exterior wall stairwell through a door on the west side of the tower, in the study. When this door opens the stone floor of the study "disappears;" but this is only an illusion which will go away when the door is closed. To stay on the stair contemplating the nature of the floor is unwise, however, for two portculli set in the ceiling above and below the stairwell landing will drop with amazing speed if the door is held open more than five seconds. As the portculli drop, the landing will "open up" on a hinge attached to the interior side of the shaft. Anyone atop the landing at this point will fall eighty-five feet into the well of boiling water which provides steam for the Sarn (Roll L. Crush + 40 for the fall. Victim takes one A-E Heat critical per round immersed.) Note that the landing is actually a metal-backed slab of relatively thin stone, and will feel warm to the touch.

The study occupies a small area on the northwest side of the level. It is graced with a small hearth and filled with great chairs of wood and wool as well as a fine oak table. The table is actually a receptacle for items of interest, and the top lifts as a lid; beneath lies a Book of Water Law, a + 3 Staff of Lightning, and a x2 Ring of Fell Creature Control (latter allows one to control one subdued Fell Creature completely, so long as it is within 30 feet). Like the rest of the level, the ceiling is nineteen feet.

The library occupies the northeast side of the level, while the laboratory is to the south. To reach the sixth level one must (1) go up the stairs by way of the stairwell off the study, or (2) shimmy up a red-hot (400 degree) iron pole set into the exterior wall, behind a panel in the laboratory. The pole goes up into the wall ten feet, where it reaches the secret stair which connects Lhachglin's chambers to the Throne Room.



Level Six: Lhachglin's Chambers. Door in east wall leads onto main stairwell and to levels five, four, and three below. Door behind headboard of the bed leads to secret stair connecting these chambers to both the laboratory and the Throne Hall. A third door, in the northwest wall, opens onto (1) a balcony with a fine downriver view, and (2) a stair winding up through the exterior wall to the roof level and observatory pinnacle.

This latter door is of iron and huge, being fully a foot thick. Nonetheless it is light, for it is hollow. When open one can see a small, raised rune above the bolt mechanism on the door's side edge; by turning the rune the inside panel of the door opens to reveal Lhachglin's real treasure hold. Here he keeps: 500 gp, 2,500 gp in gems, 100 mp, a 12th level Spell-storing Ring, a x4 Staff of Firebolts, a x4 Staff of Windrunning, a + 4 Staff of Dark Summons, a 20th level Ring of Demon Mastery, a 20th level Book of Path Mastery, a pair of Boots of Invisibility, a pair of Mace Gauntlets (hands strike as maces), and a Pouch of Water Summoning (gathers up to 1 gallon per day out of the air).

The great bed pivots to reveal the secret passage, either by hand or by Lhachglin's command. Anyone beside the bed when it moves could well be knocked down as it swings. Beside the bed are a number of tomes on the History of Darkness and Evil Clericism, as well as a pair of chests filled with the Animist's clothes. A small Chest of Curses sits behind a stone panel set into the wall in back of the larger clothing chest. The panel opens manually. One opening the Chest of Curses will be attacked by a 10th level Symbol of Sleep; all within the room (aside from the household guard and Lhachglin) will be beset by the 12th level *Wind Curse* — they will be forever unable to move against the wind, regardless of their mode of transport. Should someone wish to defy the curse, they will become "part of the wind," moving with the capricious currents for 1-10 days, and then "deposited" upon the ground at random (with a fall from 0-100 feet).

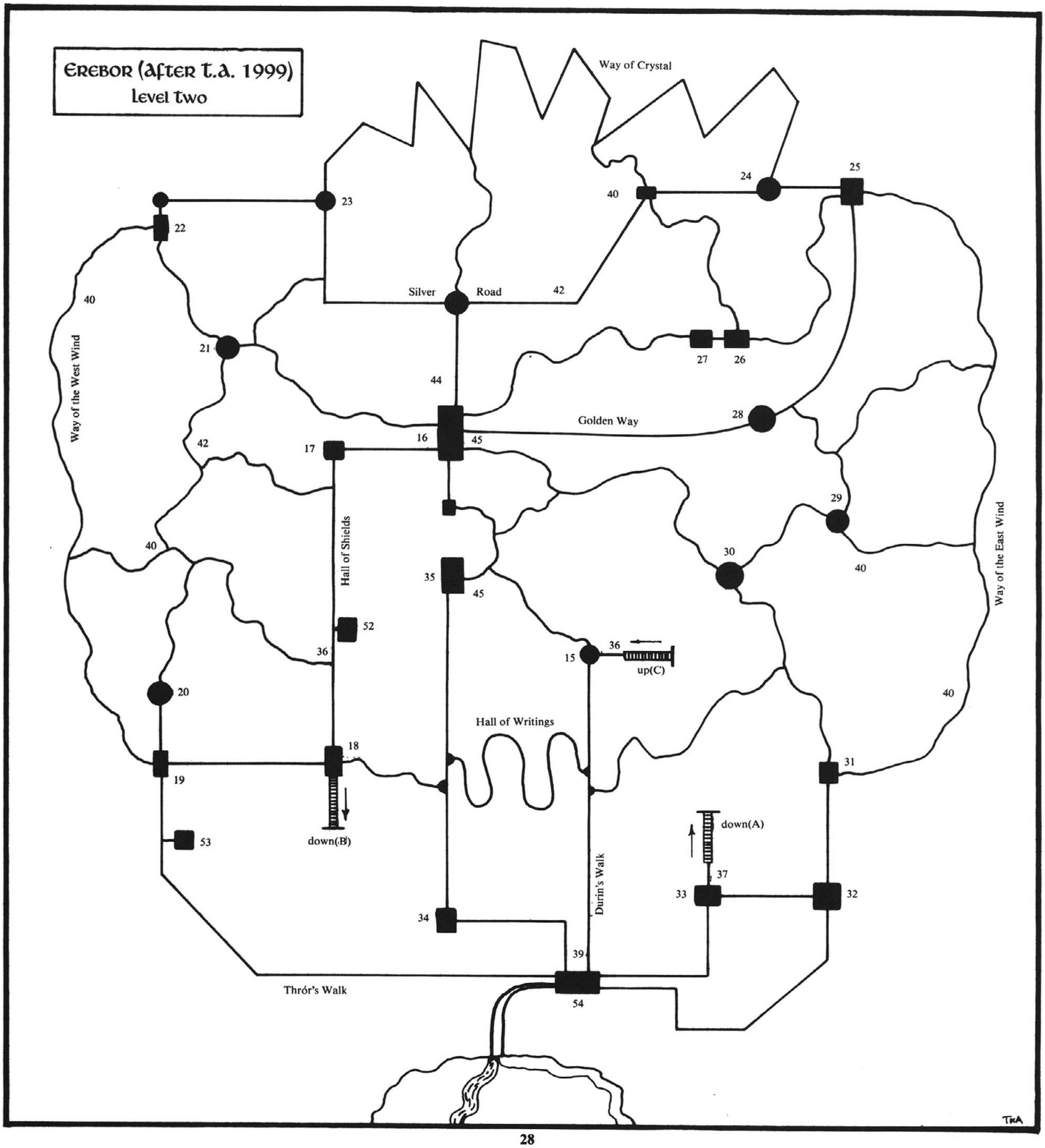
Roof Level: This open area lies 165 feet above the base of the tower. Rimmed by a thick, four foot high wall, and covered with smooth black marble, it provides a safe and beautiful vantage point. Small bits of inlaid silver dot the floor and simulate the primary constellations of the heavens. A large "active tree" stands guard, often taking root in one of the two "rooting bowls" set into the railing's surface. Entry to the level is achieved by way of the stairwell which connects Lhachglin's room to the Observation Pinnacle.

Observation Pinnacle: Here one can gaze upon the stars through the Animist's fine telescope. The enchanted device was devised in Arthedain and stolen in one of the Witch King's early campaigns. It can (1) cast a lightning bolt 300' feet at a fully-sighted target or (2) simply act to magnify one's vision.

Note: *Refuse and waste are deposited in shafts set into the exterior walls on every level but three. The material is washed downstream by water from the falls which clears the receiving pool. Fresh water is brought in from the lake level. Below the Goriwing the water becomes strangely enchanted and is dangerous to drink. This is perhaps due to the Sarn Goriwing itself, and it is said that "so long as the tower remains, the waters will be sorrowful."*

EREBOR ("THE LONELY MOUNTAIN") – POST T.A. 1999

The design of the Dwarven city of Erebor is unquestionably very different from that of Thranduil's home. All of the halls and rooms in Erebor are carved out of the rock, their faces smooth and unbroken. Many areas, in fact, have fine walls and floor of set stone, to vary the color and texture of the surfaces. The doors and gates within the city are either of wood bound with steel bands or are themselves made of steel, and all swing back on superbly made hinges. Erebor is a maze of halls and corridors; tunnels and mansions. The maps following depict the basic overall layout of the Lonely Mountain interiors. A few clusters of rooms have been laid out in more detail on succeeding pages. Below is a key to the numbering of rooms, as well as a brief description of some of the more unique areas. The layout of the rooms in Erebor is basically on two levels, although there are small variations in altitude between various rooms on a given level. Two grand, long and wide stairways join the two main levels, and they are noted as "A" and "B" on the map. Only a fragment is shown in the plans, for each bends back on itself before arriving at the other level. In addition to these ways, there is a stair up to the King's Halls, above the upper level; and of course there is the long ramp from the Bottommost Hall to the secret entry on the side of the mountain.



1.-35. These are large rooms with no specific name, but are identified by numbers. For reference purposes, they were referred to as, for example the "twenty-first hall" Naturally each of these halls is somewhat different from the next in layout or decoration.

36. **Pit Trap**. Controlled by a lever concealed in the wall nearby, the traps are of a standard design, being 30 feet long, and the full 35 foot width of the corridor. Normally set so that they are "off", and the floor of the hall is safe, pulling the lever sets the trap. The next person who treads on the area will be plunged seventy feet onto a bed of vicious spikes. Roll on the "Fall-Crush" table plus 70, and, if applicable, use the "Impact" critical hit table, in addition, give 1-6 "Puncture" criticals.

37. **Ceiling Trap**. Very similar in setup to the pit traps, except that a section of the ceiling of the same size is rigged to fall. The lever can be made to set the trap to go off when someone steps on the designated area; or it can be used to trigger the trap immediately. Those caught in the path of destruction are treated to 2-12 strikes on the "Fall-Crush" table plus 70. The corridor is thus blocked in any case.

38. **Smelters and forging area.**

39. **Guardroom.**

40. **Residence.**

41. **Storeroom.**

42. **Recreation.**

43. **Cell.**

44. **Crafthall.**

45. **Shop.**

46. **Secret Entry**. (Used by Bilbo & Co. in T.A. 2941). The tunnel to the exit in a vale on the side of the Mountain is two miles long and slopes down gently to meet the Bottommost Chamber.

47. **Bottommost Chamber.** (Smaug's home after T.A. 2770).

48. **Thrain's Hall**. A vaulted chamber with many wells, this is the backup water supply for the Mountain, after the river on the upper level.

49. **Mines**. Each of these three rooms has several tunnels, much more crude in construction than the rest of the city, running out from it and down. These are the access-ways to the mines far below.

50. **Chamber of Nain**. A great hall in the center of the Lower Halls of Erebor, this room is one of the record-keeping areas. Many scrolls and books are held here, recounting the history of the Dwarven race, as well as histories of Erebor; financial records, mining tallies, official information and accounts of the King's policies, etc.

51. **Lower Vaults**. Holding the majority of Erebor's treasure in terms of sheer mass of gold and silver, and more common items. Unquestionably there are millions in gold and gems hoarded here, a treasure too vast to begin to detail on these pages.

52. **Armor stores**. These areas hold most of the armor and weapons of the army of the Mountain.

53. **Great Armor Stores**. Here are kept the truly marvelous items of armor and weaponry (mithril; +20 and up armor and weapons). These vaults are secured by three locked steel doors, each very hard to open, and of course guarded at all times.

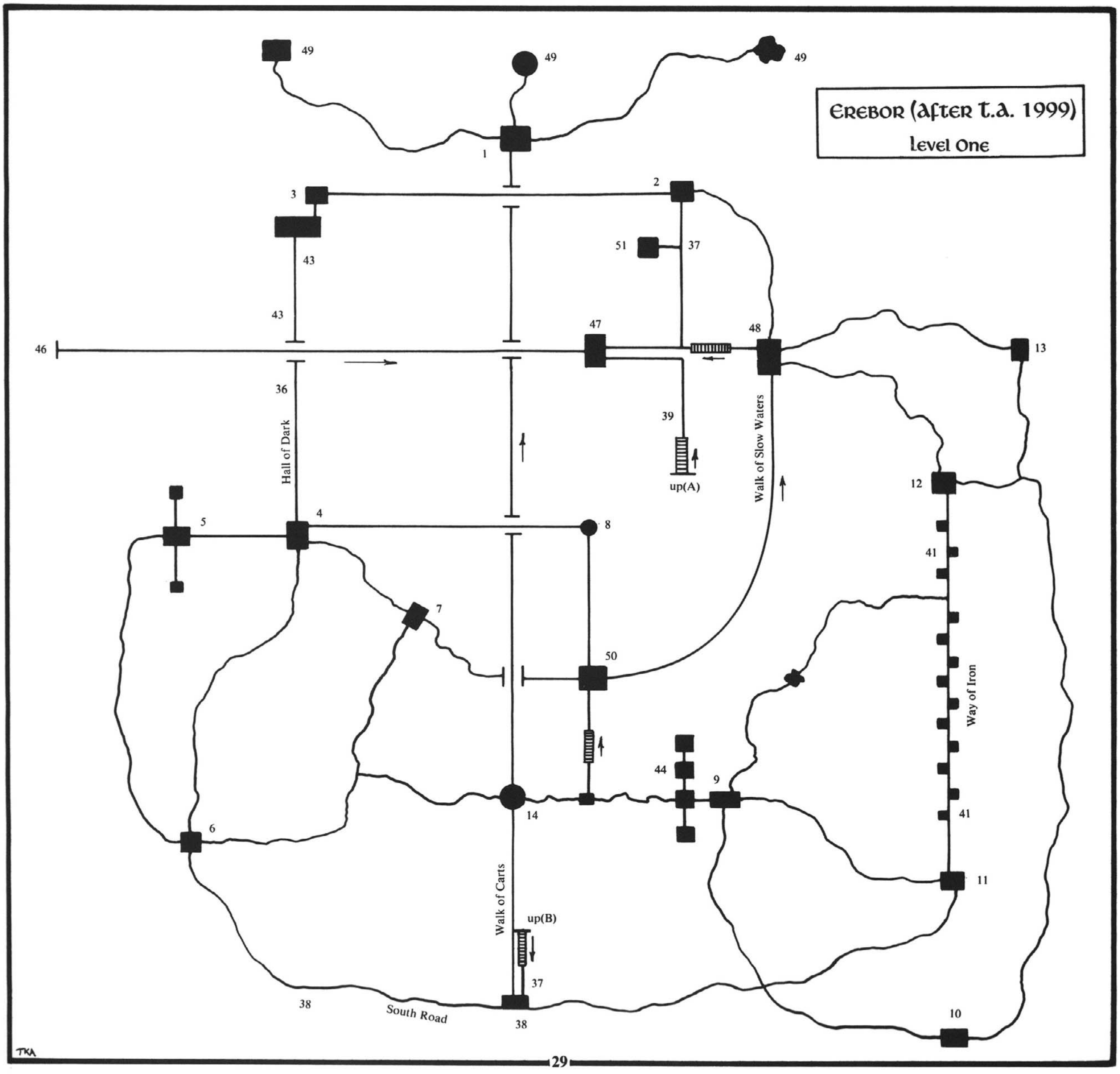
54. **Chamber of Thrór**. Near the main entry, the Chamber of Thrór is a vast hall used both of feasting, and large councils. It is in decor one of the grandest rooms under the Mountain. There are several rooms adjacent to the Chamber: (see detailed layout) a. Kitchen; b. pantry; c. caucus room; d. lounge; e. guardroom; f. secret passage to King's Library.

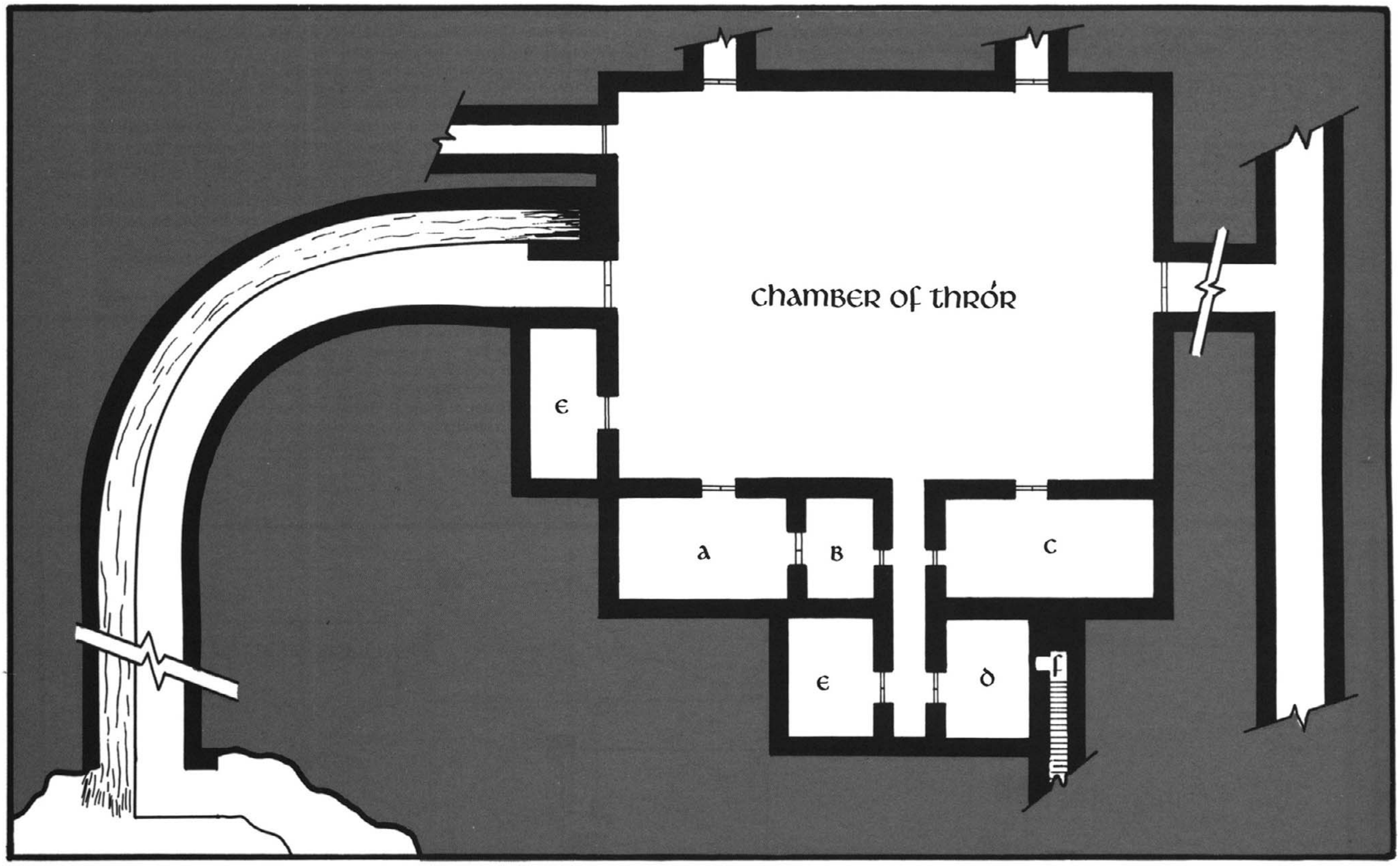
55. **Durin's Hall**. A very holy place in the cluster of rooms which are the King's private apartments (see layout), it is his own chapel to the Valar.

56. **King's Bedroom.**

57. **King's Library.**

58. **King's Lounge.**





Several halls in the complex are given specific names (almost like roads). Most are self-explanatory, or merely poetic. However, a few are worthy of specific mention:

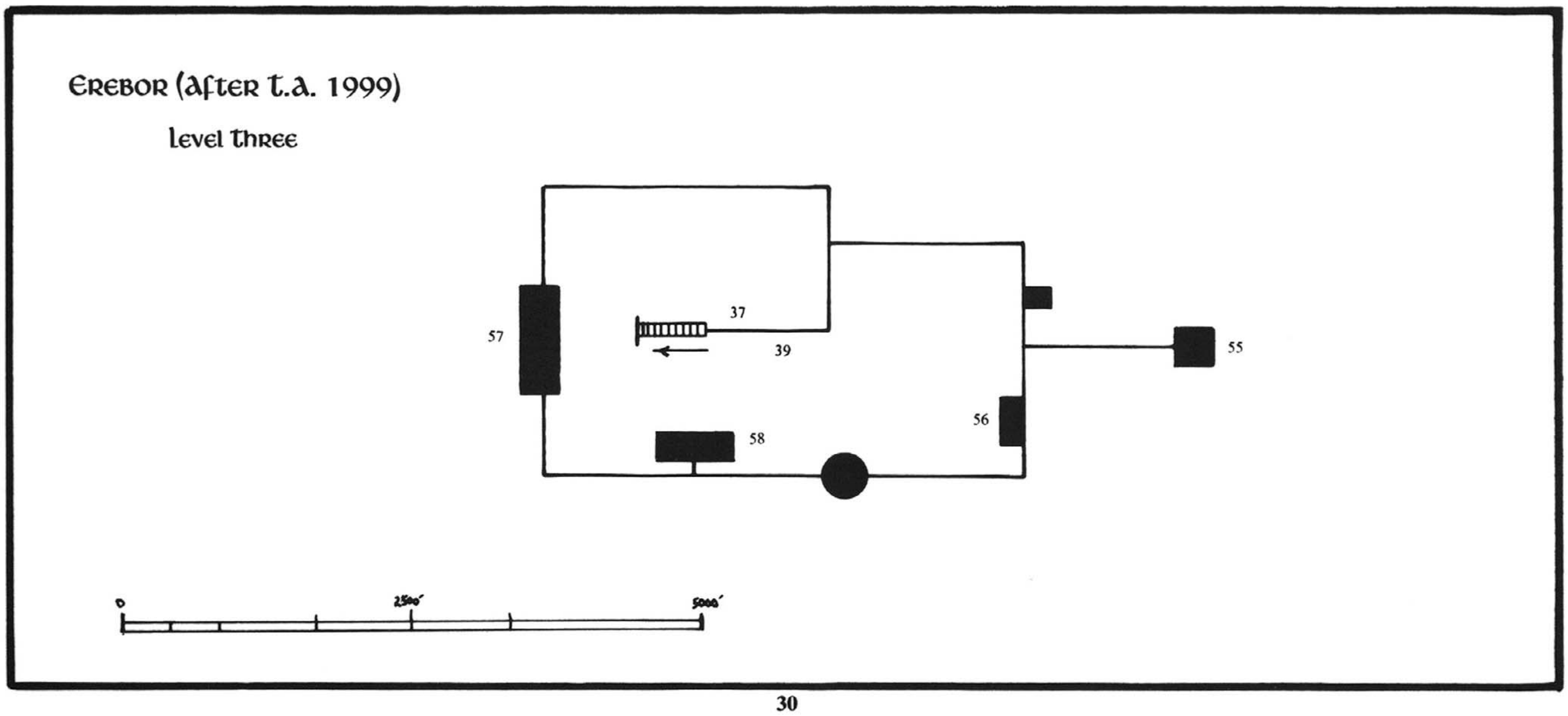
Hall of Writings. Upon the walls of this passage are inscribed, in the runes of Daeron, the general history of Erebor, constantly updated.

Hall of Shields. Hung on the sides of this hallway are dozens of ornamental shields, representing the families living under the Mountain.

Walk of Carts. This is the passage along which are drawn carts loaded with ore to be smelted and made into ingots, or forged into items. There are tracks set in the floor to guide the transports.

Walk of Slow Waters. There is a trough running along the side of this corridor, filled with slowly flowing water which runs down to Thrain's Hall below. The source of the water is probably a branch of the river which springs forth in force near the exit above.

Way of Crystal. The northern wall of this corridor is almost completely covered by beautiful sparkling natural quartz formations.



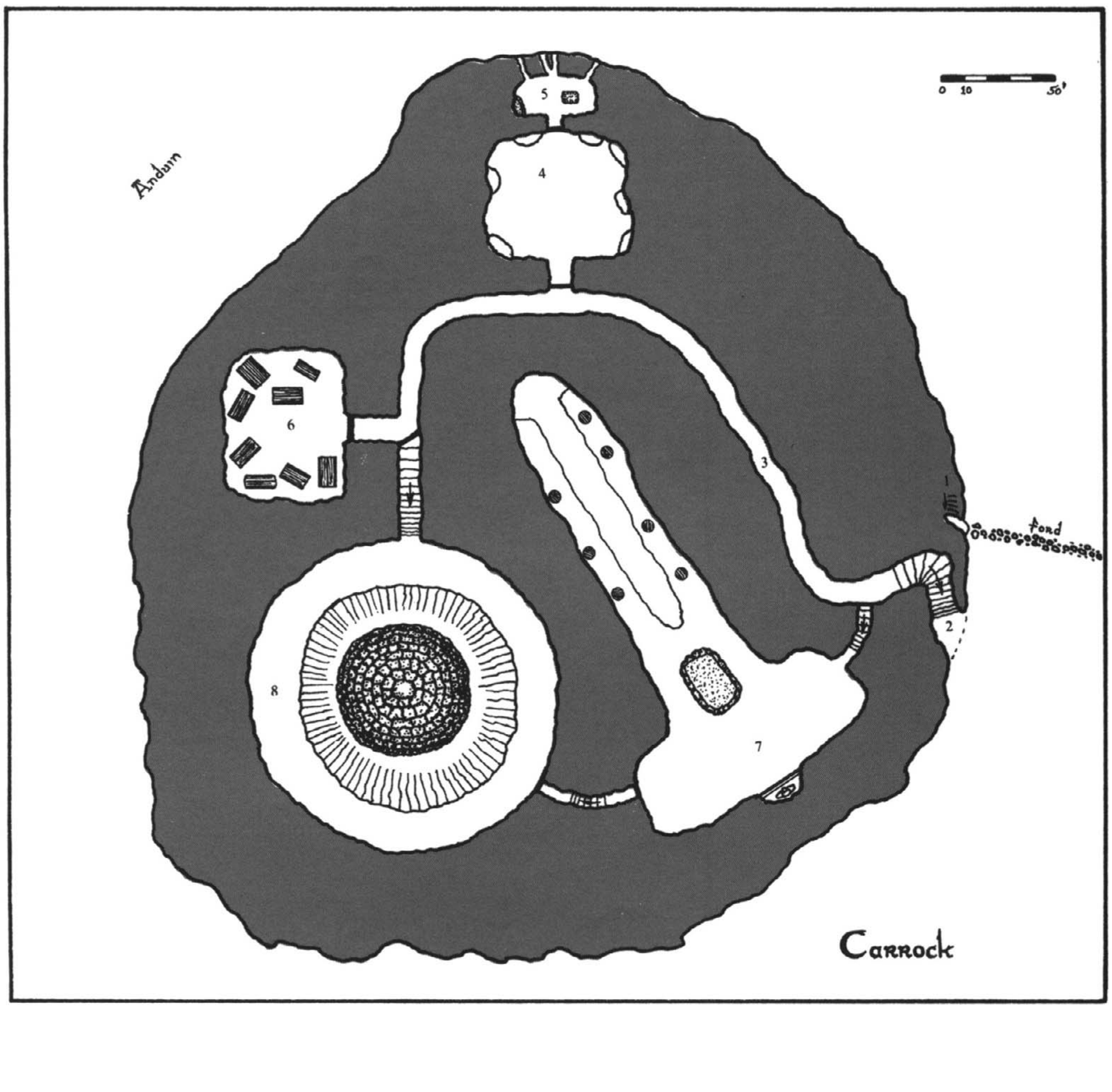
HOLY CARROCK

The Holy Carrock is sacred to the ***Beijabar.*** It is, perhaps, for this reason that the manor of the High Shape Changer is traditionally located nearby. The rock itself lies in the middle of the Anduin, a little closer to the eastern shore, and is approximately 2 miles north of the Iach Carrock (S. "Carrock Ford"). It is a huge (65' high) granite boulder, surmounted by a carved stone throne which faces upriver. Stairs cut in the side of the rock lead down to the water's edge and a ford which takes one to the eastern bank. A fissure which knifes into the Carrock's east side has been cleverly widened into a hall which leads into the interior chambers. From the outside, the cleft appears as no more than a small cave. Note that the Holy Carrock is often watched by the lords of the Beijabar, and they are quite capable of dispatching unwanted intruders.

The Interior

1. **Stairs.** These wind up the rock to the open throne area above. They are cut directly into the rock and permit no more than a single file.
2. **Entry Cave.** A twenty-foot wide natural chamber, never exceeding ten feet in height. At the back of the cave is a flat wall made of basalt. Runes and paintings cover the wall's surface and tell the tale of an ancient saga involving a Great Bear. A real metal-shafted arrow sticks into one of the figures. When the arrow is rotated, the wall slides five feet to the left and partially reveals an ascending stair behind.
3. **Hall of Claws.** This winding passage was cut out of a gas channel which pierced the boulder when it was first formed. The iron tools used to shape the ceiling and walls bore claw-like serrated edges and left jumbled marks in the rock which look akin to those left by bear scratches; hence the name. The passage is ten feet by ten feet in most places, and has notches for the placement of torches. Small air holes are cut in the ceiling at intervals of thirty feet.
4. **Sleeping Chamber.** This room has been cut out of the rock in order to provide a resting place for a family of seven. Bowl-like rock shelves line the walls and can be filled with straw in order to give one a semblance of comfort. Fine runes (modified Cirth) circle the walls near the ceiling and tell the tale of the Beijabar's ancestors, relatives of the Edain who settled in the passes of the northern Misty Mountains in the late First Age. Twelve foot ceiling.
5. **Water Chamber.** Here a well lies, cut fourteen feet to reach a catch pool in the river. A small fire pit is set into to the western wall; a smoke hole is set above it. Watch positions are placed in the northern wall. Nine foot ceiling.
6. **Store Room.** Rectangular stone receptacles cover the floor. Each is carved in such a way as to appear to be of wood. The lids mimic roofs, and the receptacles represent Beijabar Long Houses.
7. **Chamber of the Dancers.** This room is akin to the main room of a Long House, and contains a large fire pit and a raised stone platfrom which acts as both an eating table and a "stage". The walls are covered with bizarre cave paintings which depict countless battles. A huge block of resin is set into the nook in the southeast wall; within it is a perfectly preserved Great Bear. Normally the nook is concealed by a counter-weighted stone which can only be raised by pulling up on its raised surface; the lift involves some 300 pounds. This preserved beast may be some ancient leader whose presence inspires the dancers when the latter are properly frenzied. Huge mead jars are set in wall nooks around the room. The floor of the room is seven feet above the river's waterline, and seven feet below the norm for the rest of the complex. The ceiling is 28 feet.
8. **Burial Chamber.** This round room has a floor set fourteen feet below the water surface, and a 56' ceiling (42 feet above the waterline). At the river level, fourteen feet above the room's base, is another floor surface, a circular walkway which surrounds the central pit. The fourteen foot deep pit holds a large, beehive-shaped tomb of loose rock. The top of curved roof of the tomb is twenty-eight feet above the base floor and fourteen above the surrounding ledge. This "hive" can only be entered seven feet above the base, through an aperture (7' dia.) blocked by a round discus-like stone. This stone can be rolled to the side in its crude track, but it requires the strength of two normal men. The rock moves up the runners which wind around the tomb some ten feet, and can be locked in place by moving the obvious block-stone underneath its curve. Should one enter the tomb without pulling on a bear claw-like iron stave to the left of the entry, the block stone will be pulled aside and the stone allowed to slide back down the runners. Within the tomb lie the remains of the eight dead Beijabar lords, each buried in a hive-shaped jar. The chute into the tomb slopes down at a 45 degree angle and drops seven feet. It is lined with mud which conceal hidden spikes. The razor-sharp iron spikes are covered with a 10th level bee venom which destroys 1-2 eyes of the victim by converting the optic juices to honey.

   The tomb holds 100 mp, three +20 battle axes, four +20 two-hand swords, one +30 club, ten +15 short swords, seven +10 hand axes, one +15 long bow, two +10 helms, a Horn of Bear Summoning, a Stave of Water Walking, six +10 shields, and 2,000 gp in gems. Another caved-in treasure chamber once laid below; but unlike the rest of the room, it was not of carved rock, and caved in centuries ago. The rebuilt burial chamber conceals its presence to all but the most perceptive dwarf. Entry into the burial chamber is afforded through secret stone doors which can be moved to the side by 2-3 strong men. Both openings lie above stone stairways. Every other stair is of an enchanted resin which will instantly harden around things immersed in it. The resin is grey and appears as rock.



NAHALD KÛDAN (Rh. "Secret Holes") in the Nan Morsereg

A winding path works its way up the steep reddish cliffs overlooking the Nan Morsereg. The circle of cairns beside the valley stream's spring-pool marks the beginning of the climb. White pebbles cover the trail as it ascends in switch-backs toward the top of an 1800' hill. Deep green grass covers the hill's peak and carpets the valley proper; but on the cliff-side the terrain is nearly vertical and uniformly rusty in coloration.

Lower Ledge: As the path finishes its twenty-first switch-back a red-stone stairway begins; it rises to the lower ledge of the Nahald Kûdan. Here reside three of the *Maeghirrim*: Brego, Edwodyn, and Thraear. Their stone homes reflect the Northman's ancestral preference for the rugged hive-shaped design. Like the abodes of the other lords these are built on two levels; the lower portion is reserved for stores and has a small well, while the upper area affords comfortable living quarters. A steep wooden stair connected to the outer wall joins the two floors. The entry opens onto the upper floor, where a single room, thirteen feet in diameter and fifteen feet at its highest, covers the entire level. A stone fireplace is built into the only interior support, a stone column at the the center. The upper floor is of a deep wood covered with carpets, while the lower level's surface is flat white stone. The grey walls are thickest at the base where the stone is fitted to a depth of eight feet. Near the peak of the roof the ceiling is but three feet thick. An interior wood frame covered with spruce panelling reinforces the structure. Doors are always hewn from oak.

Upper Ledge: The lower and upper ledges are connected by another winding path which cuts its way up into a cleft in the cliffside. A substantial, flat field covers the upper ledge. This area is considerably larger than the lower area. Seven residence structures, each the usual twenty-five feet in diameter at the surface level, dot the cliff's edge. Two greater buildings are set further back in the vale. These are sixty feet in diameter, and are nothing more than a larger variation on the same architectural theme. They have four floors instead of two, the walls vary from twelve to five feet in thickness, and a stronger wood frame is employed.

As one looks at the Nahald Kûdan from below, the storage building is located at the far left of the upper ledge, nestled beneath the hill's overhang. The Place of the Ten, an assembly and study area, is in the large structure at the far right. The small residences are occupied (from left to right) by Freahar, Haed, Broehir, Breor, Freowyn, Orduclax, and Daeg-udra.

The Caves: Two great caves are set into the cliff under the giant overhang. The one on the left is no more than a winding twenty-foot wide passage (10' high) which cuts in 100'. There ten prison cells are kept, each a 4' x 4' x 4' rock inset barred by an iron grate. This area is guarded by seven 3rd level Northman fighters — one 3-man and two 2-man shifts.

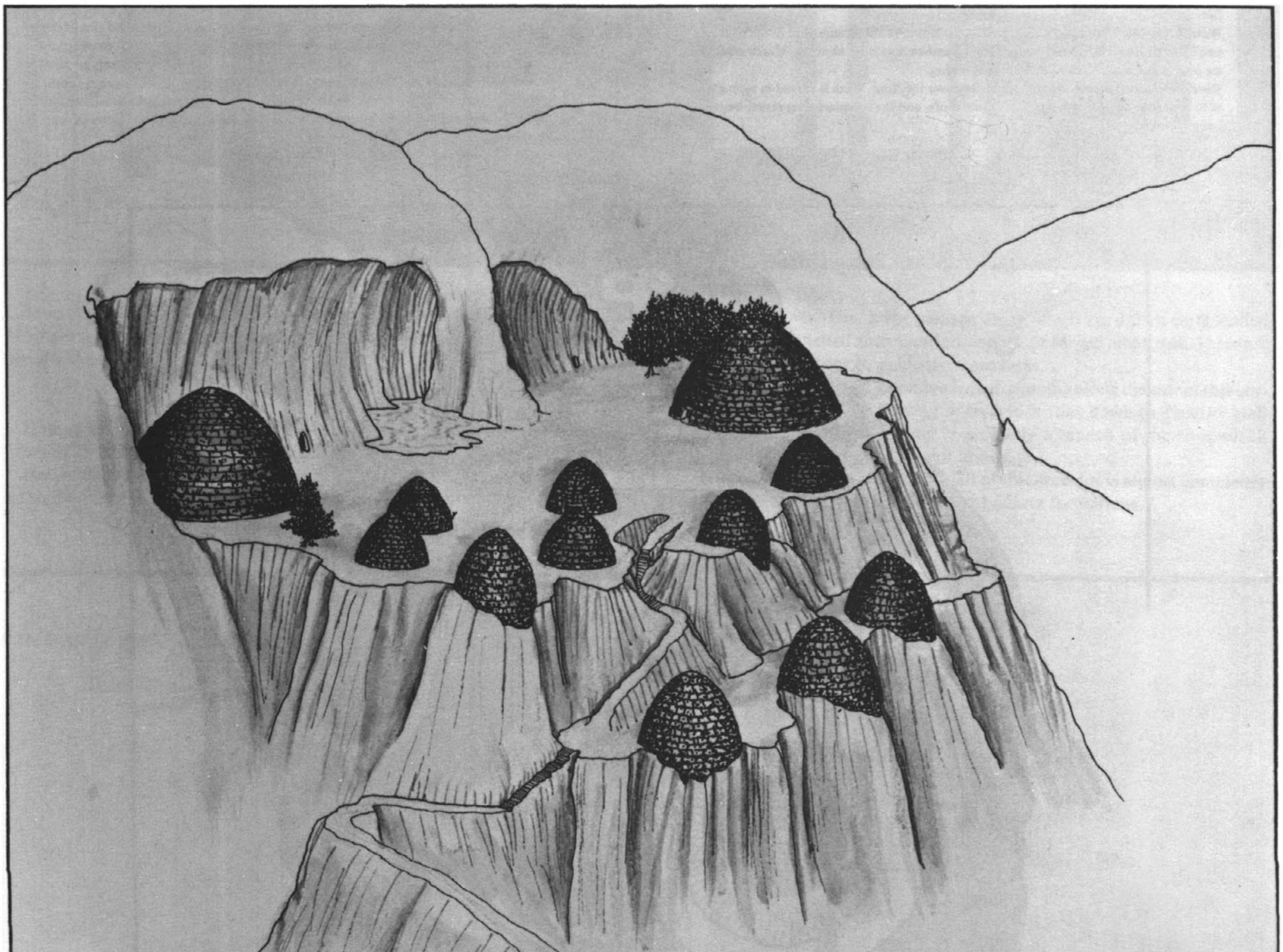
The other cave is reached by a 3' round shaft which slopes up into the cliff at a 30 degree angle. The shaft is sixty feet long and can be blocked by portculli set at 6' intervals. (The portculli are controlled by (1) levers on the interior, or (2) by an overriding, immovable "controlling" stone in Orduclax's chambers, which operates by touching the surface and concentrating for 1-2 rds.) In addition, a jagged quartz sphere covered uith the poison *Brithagurth* is suspended above the upper opening to the shaft. It can be released (1) automatically, whenever someone touches a portcullis in the "up" position or (2) manually by a lever in the upper reaches of the cave. The shaft leads to a dome shaped chamber 90' in diameter and 55' in height. Dominating the center is a 12' deep pool, 30' feet in diameter, which surrounds a single throne of black glass (with a seat of human hair). Here the Maeghirrim meet in secret to discuss strategy or for high Rituals of Darkness. Symbolic executions are also performed in this chamber. Lining the bottom of the pool is the Cult's treasure: 3,000 gp, 150 mp, 30 gems worth 100 gp each, 50,000 sp, ten x3 Staves, a Wand of Fear, three (1 lb) Silver Lions which come to life upon the command of the last possessor, a shield which reflects up to one spell per rd, Gloves of Arrow Deflection (50 DB bonus vs missile attacks), and an Orb of Seeing which allows the user to observe any known vantage point within one half mile as if he/she were there.

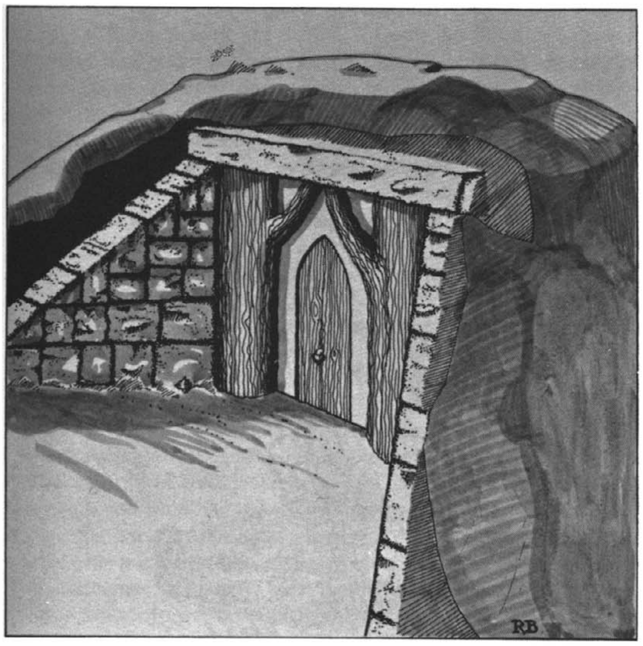
Description of Place of the Ten: There are four levels. Each is connected by a ladder which is affixed to the central pillar (and is reached by an elevated walk whenever an obstacle intervenes). The bottom floor, level one, is the study and laboratory. A well of fresh water surrounds the central support pillar, wherein lies a fireplace.

Level two is flush with the ground and houses the entry-way. Here an assembly hall has been constructed. Large pillows made from stuffed dogs litter the room.

Level three is the library which houses various tomes of Darkness. The books are all covered with black goatskin covers and have no markings. Only the Ten know of the contents, and every third book is inscribed with nothing but alternating 9th level Runes of Death and Sleep. The Maeghirrim always open a book to its second page; should they forget, it is better to fall asleep.

Level four is the area reserved for daily meditation.





Tomb (Uthael Beoac)

8.0 SUGGESTIONS FOR ADVENTURE AND GAMEMASTER AIDS

This section deals with (1) helping the GM integrate the material provided in the module into his/her game, and (2) providing a framework for developing adventures set in Northern Mirkwood.

8.1 ADVENTURING IN NORTHERN RHOVANION

The following is an area by area breakdown of what might be considered ideal locations for adventuring in northern Rhovanion. Some notable NPCs and relevant settings are featured as examples of local situation. The material provided should be used in conjunction with any applicable data found in the body of the module, and particular attention should be given to Section 9.0; after all places change, often considerably, with time.

8.11 GREY MOUNTAIN ADVENTURES

The Ered Mithrin stands as the most ominous and challenging physical feature of the region. Its residents pose an active and considerable danger to all the peoples of northern Rhovanion, and those foolhardy enough to attempt entry into the mountains proper can expect more than their share of excitement. The topography alone can prove fatal.

There are four principal areas for adventure in the Ered Mithrin: (1) the northern foothills and the associated "Northern Waste;" (2) the peaks and upper vales; (3) the Withered Heath; and (4) the southern and eastern borderhills.

8.111 Action North of the Grey Peaks

The Ered Mithrin rises relatively gradually from the rolling plains and broken hills of the Northern Waste. Unlike the southern face of the range, the north side presents no sheer mountain wall. Instead, glaciers cascade down narrow U-shaped valleys and spawn small tumults of cold water which eventually find their way north to the Encircling Sea (S. "Ekkaia"). Stands of silvery firs line the middle slopes of the more sheltered valleys. Deep glacial lakes dot the countryside. Loose scree, the crushed rock churned up by the seasonal movements of the iceflows, impedes travel in many areas, but the landscape is still more forgiving than that found in the southern Ered Mithrin. The strong winds and brutal temperatures, on the other hand, are unmatched within the region (see Sec. 3.2).

Within this area the adventurer will have a number of problems. To begin with, food is relatively scarce; the lakes and streams hold little or no fish (10% are "stocked") and the principal game animal— the Losrandir (S. "Snow Wanderers"; reindeer)— travel only in periodic herds, and are more often than not pursued by the Draughoth (S. "wolf host"). Aside from those found near the base of glaciers, plants are almost universally wanting of nutritional value, In short, one must bring his own nourishment.

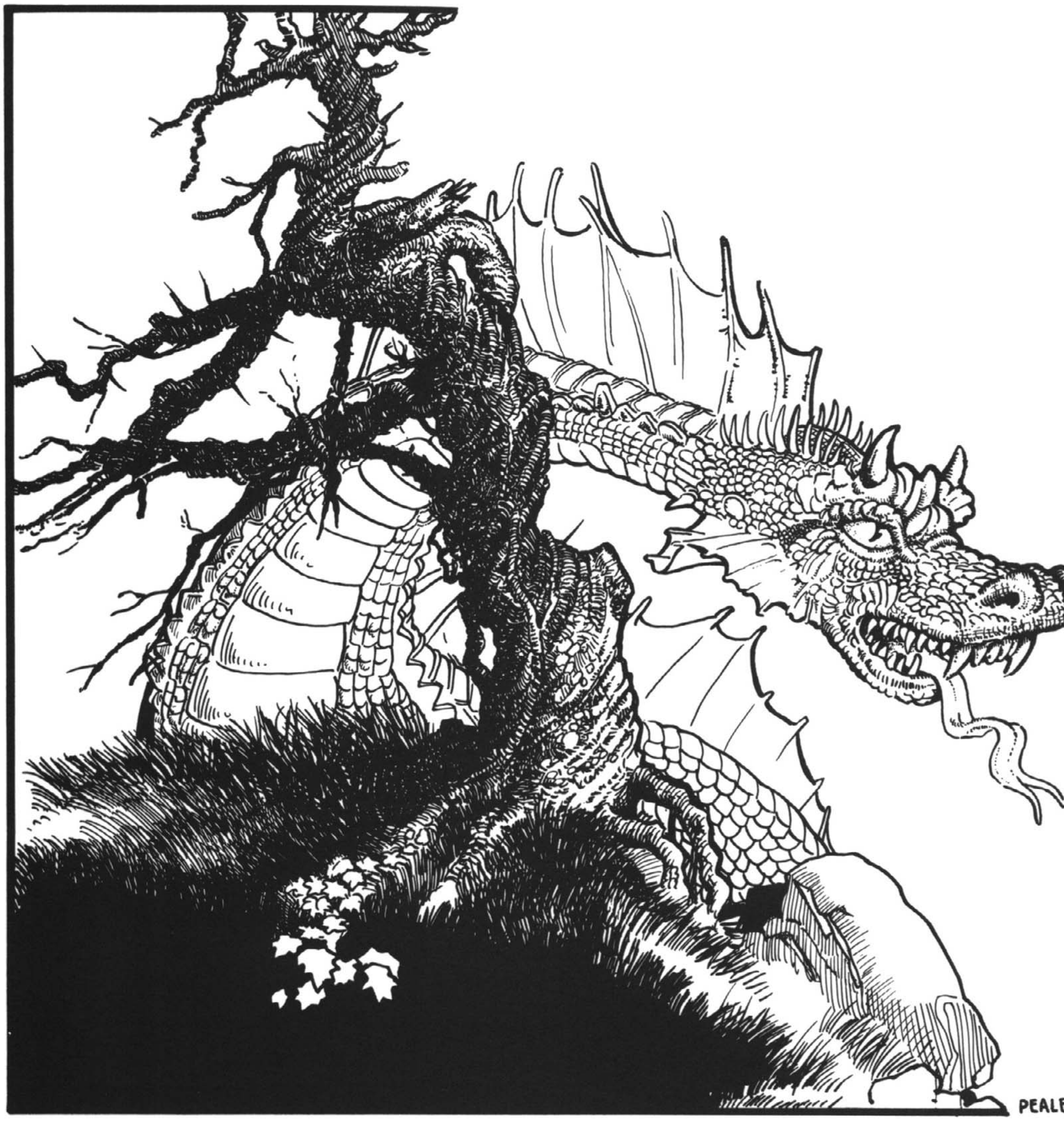
Beasts present another danger. Bands of wolves and renegade orcs dominate the lowland vales. A few giants and a number of stone trolls abide in the scrub-covered foothills. Occasional sorties by hungry drakes rising out of the Withered Heath add to the general feeling of stark terror. (See 8.2 for a summary of animal stats.)

Perhaps the worst danger are the two organized orc tribes which reside in the passes of Cirith Mithlin (S. "Greymeres pass") to the west and Cirith Himninond further east (S. "Cool Water-rock Pass"). The western group, known as the Uruk-erag, is led by one Shagrath, and numbers about 240 warriors. They live in an underground complex with three cavern entries (set at 3500, 3800, and 3900 feet) overlooking the eastern slopes of the pass which is the core of their domain. Shagrath occasionally pays homage or tribute to the orc-lord of Gundabad; his forces serve in the Forurukhoth (S. "Northern Orc Host") when forcefully called, and will later be at the "Battle of Five Armies." The Ukuk-erag mine iron and small portions of silver and hunt men, elk, and other large game in the upper vales of the Mithlin to the south. Patrols of twelve or eighteen orcs (one 6th level, three 3rd or 4th levels, and the balance in 1st and 2nd levels) scout the territory within ten miles of the pass during the night or dark hours of the winter days. Nine parties operate from the caves called Udrabax (Or. "Valley hold?") in three shifts.

The eastern tribe, the Lor-uruk-shab, is led by (14th level) "Cro" (Girishag). His army numbers nearly 300 and lives among the ruins of the First Age orc-hold known as Tuwurdrog. Their citadel consists of a rude tower and two granite cave-fissures surrounded by a semi-circular, loose-stone wall; the complex is perched on a granite outcropping on the south side of a small lake, two miles northeast of the entry to the Cirith Himninond. Cro is more independent than Shagrath but still remains sensitive to the master of Gundabad. Thus, the Lor-uruk-shab generally have



Beorning home



free reign along the northeastern Ered Mithrin. Watches manned by "lurgs" of six orcs (one third level, three second level and two first level warriors) are set 500-1000 feet below the rim of mountains for thirty miles to either side of the pass. Each site consists of a two-room, twenty-four foot oval tower surmounted by a torch signal stand, and is situated to command a clear view to the north and east or west. Patrols are about only in times of extreme need. This is perhaps due to the relative lack of discipline among the tribe, being so far from more centralized power. Like the Uruk-erag, the Lor-uruk-shab are lesser orcs and favor curved swords and bizarre pikes; they are occasionally adept with the short-bow. Cro, Shagrath, and a handfull of their inner circles, however, are Uruk-hai. Neither orc tribe enjoys the company of the other and trade is quite modest; each speaks its own related dialect and respects little but power.

The principal reason for journeying in this area revolves around the abandoned orc mines of the First Age, and the considerable caches which can be found among the two tribes or in the troll-holes of the foothills. The trolls, even in this desolate region, often hoard gold and a few jewels and/or magic weaponry (typically approx. 300 gp total) and normally live alone or in bands of two-five. The orcs maintain the wealth of over two ages of mining activity in the region; their citadel storerooms generally contain upwards of 2-3,000 gp and assorted quality weaponry. In addition, tribute caravans bearing loot for the treasure-holds of Gundabad and Angmar occasionally cross the lowland trails during the warmer nights of summer. The heavy iron-reinforced carts (usually 4-6, each carrying around 100 gp) are guarded by two "lurgs," or twelve orcs, and are accompanied by orc drive-teams (two orcs per cart) and a sixth level commander.

8.112 Action in the High Reaches of the Ered Mithrin

This region encompasses the heights above 4,000 feet. The peaks proper generally fall into the 5,500 to 6,000+ category; but some, such as the jagged Gondmaeglom (S. "Sharp Echo of Stone") rise above 7,000 feet. Due to the latitude and perverse cold flows from the scarred Northern Waste, the entire high peaks area is devoid of forest; here the tree-line is between 3,500 and 4,000 feet. Winds are continually strong and bring sudden, unpredictable shifts in weather. Fogs and snows appear without warning and are uniformly unkind to travelers. Graves at the base of cliffs are commonplace, the result of visibility problems.

Lichens, scrub bushes, grasses, and wildflowers dominate this niche and provide little support for game. As a result, food for humans here is almost wholly absent. On the other hand, few orcs or sentient dangers are present. An occasional mountain goat might appear, and some moose and elk bother the vales in summer. Small eagles and northern vultures make their homes here, together with demure forms of game.

Adventurers might nonetheless wish to enter this region. It certainly offers a refuge from the world and embraces good freshwater. In addition, ancient mannish religious sites can be found in the vales. Often dating to the mid-First Age, they are of crude unmortared stone and scree, and often incorporate all or part of an adjoining crag or cave. Some are no more than raised platforms or leveled outcroppings. Many are quite sacred, however, particularly the Thyrn Suel (Rh. "Wind Thrones") of the Uthrael Beoac (Rh. "Valley of Lords"). Rumor has it that great items of gold, some jewel-encrusted, can be found within these sites. The old tombs nearby, where the remains of elder kings were deposited beneath the rocky soil in stone receptacles, reputedly contain the weapons and items of power of those ancient warlords. The legends of wights and highland Gaurin (S. "Werewolves") have long guarded these caches (see Sec. 8.2).

Note that entry into the high peaks area can be accomplished only through the few passes in the south face of Ered Mithrin, or from the northern or eastern sides. Otherwise the landscape will claim its share of fools. Only the best mountaineers, or those with magic ropes and/or items of power can hope to traverse the more challenging faces.

8.113 Action in the Withered Heath

As the name implies, the great basin on the eastern side of the Ered Mithrin is hardly hospitable. Dry lakebeds, dehydrated swamps, and scorched moors mark the valley, a home for little but dragons. For thousands of years the great worms have claimed this territory as a vast abode for their "nests." Some, particularly the lordly "fire-drakes," inhabit the many mountain caverns and hollow hills found in the area. Most of the "cold-drakes" choose to reside at higher altitudes, either along the mountain rim overlooking the valley, or within the passes in the northeastern spur of the range.

Dragons generally take but one mate for a lifetime, but choose to live alone, visiting only during the rare mating seasons. Legends originating with the Silvan Elves indicate that such courtships occur no more than once a Yen (the Elven year, equal to 144 of mankind's). Therefore, except for very rare occasions, one will be dealing with but one of the beasts at a time; however, one is generally enough.

Dragons come in a variety of types. The original, and generally older, lineages are flightless, altogether lacking wings. These land-bound beasts are amazingly nimble and exceedingly quick when they find the effort necessary (approx. 30 mph). Usually they rely on sheer force, fire, or frost. The majority of cold-drakes are wingless and employ their considerable strength and whip-like tails to demolish an obstacle. Winged dragons, on the other hand, are usually "breathers". Their mobility on the ground is somewhat less heralded than that of their brethren, but is nonetheless more than adequate. The ability to fly is still their greatest gift; their 20 mph land speed pales before the speeds they achieve in the air — 50 mph in level flight and up to 100 mph when diving. Some, like Smaug, can travel considerably faster.

It should be noted that the cold-drakes include all those who do not have the ability to breathe fire. Many have no breath weapon, while others employ exhaled streams of frigid moisture-laden air, something analogous to a blast of icy sleet. Their habits are much akin to the fire-drakes (although few can fly), except that they shy away from extreme heat such as a lava field. Note that fell creatures may be smaller relatives of winged cold drakes.

The scaly armor-like skin of Dragons provides two principal functions: (1) it enhances their inherent resistance to spells; and (2) it makes them nearly invulnerable to weapons. Due to the difference in skin texture their head area remains somewhat unguarded. In addition to this weak point, most mature drakes have one or more areas where their scales have fallen off or failed to develop. This type of flaw has been attributed to hard campaigns or retribution for the evil that gripped the entirety of the race. Whatever the reason, makers of "dragon-slaying" arms learned early that the beasts could be felled if hit in the proper place. Young drakes, of which there are few, have scales which are softer and less well-developed; thus, they are accorded less protection. Armor made from this skin is extremely rare, but affords superb protection from the elements as well as weapons. The horn found on some older beasts can also be valuable. The substance is hard enough to batter stone, makes a fine signal horn, and can be used to construct composite bows of unparalleled quality. (See Sec. 8.23 for stats.)

Dragons are usually cunning, and more often than not enjoy games. The accumulation of wealth is their favorite, closely followed by humorous dominance displays such as the destruction of an entire town. Within the Withered Heath they are usually loners and repose upon their hoards. Only on rare occasions do they sally forth. When they do, they respect each others' territories, preferring instead to feast upon simpler, and more palatable prey.

The odds of an adventurer dying within the Withered Heath are about as high as finding a weed in Mordor. Riches abound, and the opportunities for picking up wealth by way of a raid on the cache of a great worm may seem to outweigh the risk, but one should take note that there are at least twenty dragons in the Withered Heath region. The action in the basin is dominated by these beasts, so much so that any discussion of other forms of adventure here would be ridiculous.

8.114 Action in the Eastern and Southern Foothills of the Ered Mithrin

The foothill regions to the south and east of the Ered Mithrin are relatively tame compared to the rest of the range. The animals common the scattered woodlands and rolling hills of Rhovanion are all in abundance here (see 4.0). In addition to the pleasant and the mundane, however, one can find greater challenges.

During the late spring, summer, and early fall Rhûnnish supply trains bound for Angmar skirt the southern mountain face along protected but rugged tracks (the Men Rhûnen). The wagons, carts, and men from the East are guarded, particularly at night, by the orcs of the Asharag tribe. Ukog the Lame is the (15th level) lord of this force of some 420 + lesser orcs and their nearly 100 wolves. Ten Asharag bands, each numbering about twenty orcs (one 6th level, one 5th level, six 3rd or 4th levels, six 2nd levels and six 1st levels) and six wolves, patrol the foothill region between the Cirith Mithlin and a point twenty miles east of the Cirith Fëadin (S. "Pass of the Silent Spirit") during the dark hours throughout the year.

The remaining portion of the tribe remains at Ukog's stronghold Surgax-Ukog, in the hills east of the Cirith Auris (s. "Hot-cleft Pass"). This site is a fortified mountain cleft, with tunnels cut into both sides of the precipitous basalt cliffs. A twenty foot high wall spans the opening into the crag; the only entry is through a 9' x 9' iron door which opens inwardly and can be reinforced by a thirty ton stone. The enormous rock can be moved on great oak rollers in a remarkably short time. Along the inner face of the guard wall are ramparts from which the orcs can mount a credible defense. This position is further protected by positions set some sixty feet up into the cliff-side. Two cave chambers, each accessible by winding passages from the cleft below, overlook their respective sides of the wall below. The only way up to the stronghold from the valley below is by way of a severely sloped, 9' wide, switch-back path. Stores for three months can be kept in the cool ice-lined ware chambers, and a fortune of nearly 3,000 gp in precious metals, coins, and jewels is locked in the treasure hold. A small gold mine is reputedly nearby. Continual income is a necessity, for like all the local orc tribes, some tribute is always bound for the chambers beneath Mt. Gundabad.

The tormenting events of the recent past have created a tremendous amount of disruption and forced many of the basic folk into a life of crime. Few of the brigand bands that have arisen lately make their home in the southern foothills, but a number have built bases in the lower eastern reaches of the Ered Mithrin. Occasionally these groups reach as many as thirty warriors and camp followers; generally they number no more than a dozen. The scarcity of trade, particularly the unprotected variety, and the presence of orcs and trolls, makes thievery in these parts a poor prospect. The abandoned mine shafts and natural caves of the area still make fine refuges.

8.12 ADVENTURING IN THE NORTHERN FOREST AND THE EMYN-NU-FUIN

The northern section of Mirkwood proper includes all the densely wooded territory north of the Men-i-Naugrim (S. "Way of Dwarves"). Within this area lies the Silvan Elf-kingdom of Thranduil, the Enchanted and Forest River Valleys, and the wilds of the northwest forest.

8.121 Action in the Wood-elf Territory

Thranduil's folk enjoy loose dominion over all the forested territory north and east of the Taurduin (S. "Forest River"). This is the Silvan Elf-kingdom proper, although the Elves range to the south and west as well; a considerable number spend time in the glens south of the Taurduin and east of the Gulduin (S. "River of Sorcery," or the "Enchanted River").

Within the kingdom there is a myriad of paths penetrating even the densest sections of Mirkwood, and the Elves can relay information at an amazing rate by utilizing sounds, lights, and occasional runners. Thranduil's bird-friends supplement these tools. Thus, despite the fact that the bulk of the population lives along the Taurduin in the eastern end of the wood, the Wood-elf territory is well-guarded. The occasional groups of the Cuivetpel (S. "Awakening Outer Fence") — units of nine warriors (one 5th, three 3rd, and five 2nd levels) — follow ever-changing circuits and are capable of covering the bulk of the woodland.

Adventurers entering Thranduil's kingdom by a boat bound upriver on the Taurduin find the going slow; the current is swift west of the Long Marshes. This may account for the fact that nearly everyone disembarks at Celebannon (S. "Silver Gate"), the principal trade center of the Wood-elves. Here the so-called "raft-elves" prepare goods for shipment downriver to the communities along the Annen, Celduin, and Carnen, as well as points further east (e.g. Dorwinion). Some stores are sent in large floating casks, while others are collected on finely crafted rafts of cedar and hardwood. Goods received from downriver come in a wide variety of forms, but are generally repacked in barrels while in Lake-town. All of this modest commercial bustle makes Celebannon a relatively cosmopolitan village, at least as far as the Silvan Elves are concerned. Travelers seeking excitement can get involved in trade, hiring on as guards or acting as inexpensive transporters of finer merchandise; they can also frequent the Dindraug (S. "Silent Wolf"), Celebannon's only inn. All should beware, however, of the fact that Thranduil is well-informed of any goings-on involving outsiders, particularly non-elves. Twenty-seven warriors of the elite Tirduin (S. "River Watch"), fighters drawn from the experienced ranks of the Cuivetpel, keep order. In addition, further scrutiny is offered; the watchful eye of Camthalion (S. "Steadfast Hand") is ever-present. Being second in command to the Master of Celebannon, one Ohtar (S. "Warrior"), Camthalion wields considerable local power. His daughter Narmirë (S. "Fire Flower") was abducted by a mannish raiding party while gathering fruit

only a year ago, and the Elven ranger is hungry for information which might allow him reunion or revenge. (See section 7.0 for a layout of Celebannon, and 8.16 for more on Namirë.)

Adventurers will be hard pressed to enter, much less abuse a welcome to, the Halls of the Elvenking (Amon Thranduil). There Thranduil maintains eighty-one of the Tirduin and an additional standing force of ninety-nine regular warriors (Tauranca or "Hill Jaws"). Organized in the favored nine-elf units called Uialcu (S. "Twilight Bows"), these troops patrol both the cavern complex and the hillsides above. Thranduil's young nephew Heladil commands one Uialcu of Tauranca. See section 7.0 for a layout of the Elvenking's Halls.

One of the most noticeable features of the Elf-lands in northern Mirkwood is the apparent lack of activity. There are occasional night-time festivities in the more scenic glens (even those which seem quite remote), parties which the Northmen of the region consider oddly frivolous or outright silly; but most of the Elf occupation is heavily dispersed and seems rare and random. The few Elves around are masters of the wood, however, and are skilled trackers. Adventurers spotted by these Silvan folk are (1) either captured and taken to Amon Thranduil, or (2) trailed carefully. In either case, word spreads quickly through the forest, and the Elves take care to remain concealed until they wish to "strike." One should always remember that moonlit nights and holidays are favorite times for Elven activity.

8.122 Action in the Wilder Woods

The "wildest" sections of northern Mirkwood are those outside the sway of Thranduil's folk. These areas surround the central highlands and Mountains of Mirkwood and extend northward nearly as far as the Taurduin valley. In the farthest western sections of the wood the mirky wilds cover the whole of the forested territory, all the way to the clearing that separates the trees from the Ered Mithrin. Throughout these shadowy stretches the undergrowth is dense and often nearly impenetrable. Good water is uniformly scarce. Giant spiders abound. Dank mists permeate the darkened depths. This place is a drag.

Adventurers in this section of Mirkwood are traveling through what was once called Greenwood the Great, and there are a number of abandoned mannish and Elvish sites. The lack of stone construction, mirky mists, deep shadows, and rampant ground-growth make these spots rare finds, but some folk might find them worth hunting. Mirkwood has claimed much in the way of riches. More dangerous obstacles are evident, however. Occasional hostile or overly-suspicious Wood-men or Beijabar groups travel some of the more guarded trails, and unfriendly beasts are commonplace. As noted in section 4.0, giant spiders and various other unsavory fauna populate the landscape. An adventurer in this area is hard-pressed to find a sanctuary from danger; action is the norm.

8.123 Action in the Mountains of Mirkwood

The Emyn-nu-Fuin (S. "Mountains of Mirkwood") provide an ideal locale for adventure. Girdled by stands of tall conifers, they rise 3-4,000 feet out of the sea of trees like giant, bald, rugged hills. They are covered by various grasses and scrub trees and bushes in the higher reaches, for high winds, shallow soil, tortuous inclines have prevented more extensive growth. Here lie the sources of the Gulduin and Emynen, substantial springs fed by generous rains and considerable groundwater. Aside from the river valleys, this is the moistest section of northern Mirkwood.

These mountains dominate much of Rhovanion and command the central section of the forest; the once-bustling Men-i-Naugrim lies like a ribbon in its southern shadow. The uplift's strategic value, together with a generous offering of mineral deposits, makes it an important target for forces seeking to control Wilderland. Soon after his rise at Dol Guldur around T.A. 1000, Sauron of Mordor marked it as a base for future operations. In T.A. 1276 three Ringwraiths led by Khamûl entered these highlands through what are now locally called the Emyn-i-Thang (S. "Hills of Oppression"), the western foothills.

The Emyn-i-Thang section of the Emyn-nu-Fuin now serves as a sanctuary for those forces of Darkness journeying from Dol Guldur to Angmar; it also harbors orcs assigned to guard this crucial Sauronic artery. The (18th level) Olog-hai (black troll) warrior Wodurishak (B.S. "Horseslayer"?) is lord of the area and commands a host of some 180 lesser orcs, 30 Uruk-hai, 30 wolves, countless bats, and 5 other Olog-hai. Their main hold is built in the caves above the Northman ruin at Tumsarna (S. Vale of Scree"). "Lurgs" of 24 lesser orcs (six 3rd, twelve 2nd, and six 1st levels), accompanied by 3 wolves and commanded by an "Uruk," patrol the dark forest to the north and west of the hills; and at night the open glens fall under watch. In order to assure themselves of a relatively low profile, the foul creatures do not regularly trespass upon the Men-i-Naugrim. Nonetheless, night-time travelers are often "lost" to the mysteries of Mirkwood.

Higher up in the Emyn-nu-Fuin resides the animist Lhachglin (S. "Gleam of the Leaping Flame"). A mannish servant of Khamûl's, this enchanter originally hails from the warm hills of Nûrad. He reputedly traces his bloodline through the Nûrhoth royal house. Whatever his origin, Lhachglin is a formidable spell-caster and is a master of the ways of plants and water. With the aid of his Dark Master, he has fomented patterns of evil in the woods, and has called forth an onslaught of foul, twisted vines and bush which have assaulted the fine foilage of the great Greenwood. In their quest for survival, even the once-solemn trees have become aggressive, lashing out at any vague threat they might perceive. This terror has been compounded by a soiling of the cool Curuwen (S. "Cunning Water") — the stream now dubbed Gulduin (S. "River of Sorcery," the "Enchanted River") — as well as the ever-lengthening Shadow of Dol Guldur. Lhachglin lives in a hollow spire of rock in the middle of the Goriwing (S. "Abhorrent Spray"), the sixty foot cataract a few miles northwest of the Gulduin's source. He is closely protected by one of the demonic Dindae (S. "Silent Shadows"), and maintains a guard of thirty Uruk-hai (six 5th, twelve 3rd, and twelve 2nd levels) in the rocky crags surrounding his hold. These orcs also maintain a vigil over the numerous trails which connect Sarn Goriwing to the Dark hollows to the south and west. In addition to these minions, Lhachglin has encircled the area (a 2 mile radius) with hundreds of Yavin Girith (S. "Shuddering Fruits"), beautiful vines which hang like fine curtains from the noble trees of the forest. Their tasty golden fruits are insidiously alluring; and their bluish leaves produce a fine, almost imperceptable mist which acts to send nearby fools into a deep, continual sleep (see 8.4). Unwary travelers encountering these cruel plants invariably awake after a fruit-laden feast in the hands of unkind Uruk-hai.

8.124 Action in tne River Valleys

The Nan Taurduin (S. "Valley of the Forest River") is considered by Thranduil to be the main artery of his realm. Actually, it is on the border of "safe Elven lands", for the south bank of the river can be quite dangerous, particularly at night. The young, swift-flowing Taurduin has steep, rocky banks which allow any number of denizens of Mirkwood a safe harborage. Giant spiders, wolves, and occasional sorties of bats inhabit these reaches. Nonetheless, Silvan Elves use the pine needle-lined paths on the north side, and occasionally paddle their Sirithorn (S. "Flowing River-wood") on the waters proper. Above the Iant Calentaur (S. "Greenwood Bridge"), however, Elven presence is rather sparse; upriver trade is modest.

The Nan Gulduin (S. "Valley of the Enchanted River") is a more dangerous setting for adventurers. Those who are unfortunate enough to partake of the cool, bewitched waters fall into a deep coma-like sleep, within which nightmares abound. Too great a sampling results in (1) perpetual sleep or (2) a tortuous death. Since feeder streams and other sources of freshwater are scarce in this area, the temptation to drink the "Waters of Sorrow" is great, and one should take care to bring his/her own full waterskins. A journey to the upper vales of the Emyn-nu-Fuin or the Nan Taurduin (and the northern tributaries) is a prerequisite to finding good water in the north of Mirkwood.

Giant spiders are exceedingly common in the Nan Gulduin, and this may account for the relative scarcity of orc incursions. Orcs, trolls, wolves, wargs and bats are quite common as one reaches the upper Gulduin, however, for the tribe Shirkag makes its home in the wooded canyon about twenty miles downstream from the Goriwing. This grouping of about sixty lesser orcs (two 10th, six 6th, nine 5th, thirteen 3rd and thirty 2nd levels) is led by the Uruk Drurgangra (B.S. "Wolf Jaws"?) and pays homage to the "Master of the Falls." (Actually Lhachglin never sees these minions, preferring instead to send his Dindae — the heinous Slyardach.) The other servants of Darkness found in the area are disorganized scavengers; they are about because of the atmosphere, not out of strategic need.

8.13 LONG LAKE ADVENTURES

The Annen (S. "Long Lake") region is centered around the lake proper, a deep body of cool freshwater which fills the lower two thirds of a glacial valley. The Celduin (S. "River Running") feeds the lake and also acts as its sole outlet. Several very small streams which surface in the surrounding ridge area add their water as well. Good farmland covers both sides of the narrow valley surrounding the Annen, although the western shores are traditionally more settled. This region also provides the most cosmopolitan setting in Wilderland, for it embraces Esgaroth — the great mercantile Lake Town.

8.131 Action in Lake Town

In this bustling, wooden settlement an adventurer will be able to barter for or purchase the majority of goods and equipment necessary for extended wilderness campaigns. Merchandise shipped up the Celduin from Rhûn and the Carnen Valley, Dwarven items from the Iron Hills, Elven

work from Mirkwood, and goods brought from the Anduin on the Men-i-Naugrim all find their way into the warestores of Esgaroth.

The main authority in Lake Town resides in a Master elected by the Atanathrain (Rh. "Council of Men"), ostensibly composed of all the "citizens in good standing." Merchants, warriors, and landowners all belong to this class, for even the common men of Esgaroth are shrewd in ways of politics. Real power, however, is often concentrated in the hands of a select few. The current Master, Odagavia (12th level), is probably the strongest figure in town.

The Edfreahir (Rh. "Associations") are a major part of commercial life in Lake Town. Unlike traditional guilds, they require no universal membership; instead, they are voluntary organizations of merchants and craftsmen, and a number of them may serve the same segment of society (e.g. there are four Edfreahir of coopers). They act to allow men to group themselves for commercial and social purposes— giving them training, business leverage, and a means for having parties. Some wealthy folk join more than one, but this is generally frowned upon. Others belong to none, apparently hoping to protect secrets and avoid dues. The competitive atmosphere of Esgaroth is intense, so a wise merchant or craftsman must choose his/her course carefully; and while women do not normally sit with the Atanathrain, they are free to join an Edfreahar. These groups often set their own prices on goods and services, but the overall free market plays an important role. Commerce in Lake Town, unlike that found in "guild cities," is hardly a rigid matter.

This loose air also permeates Esgaroth's social life. Rowdiness is the order of the night, when life in the narrow streets is given to song and drink. As the shops and stalls around the central harbors close each dusk, the taverns, pleasure-halls, and fest-halls lining the outer fringes of town open their doors to townsfolk and travelers.

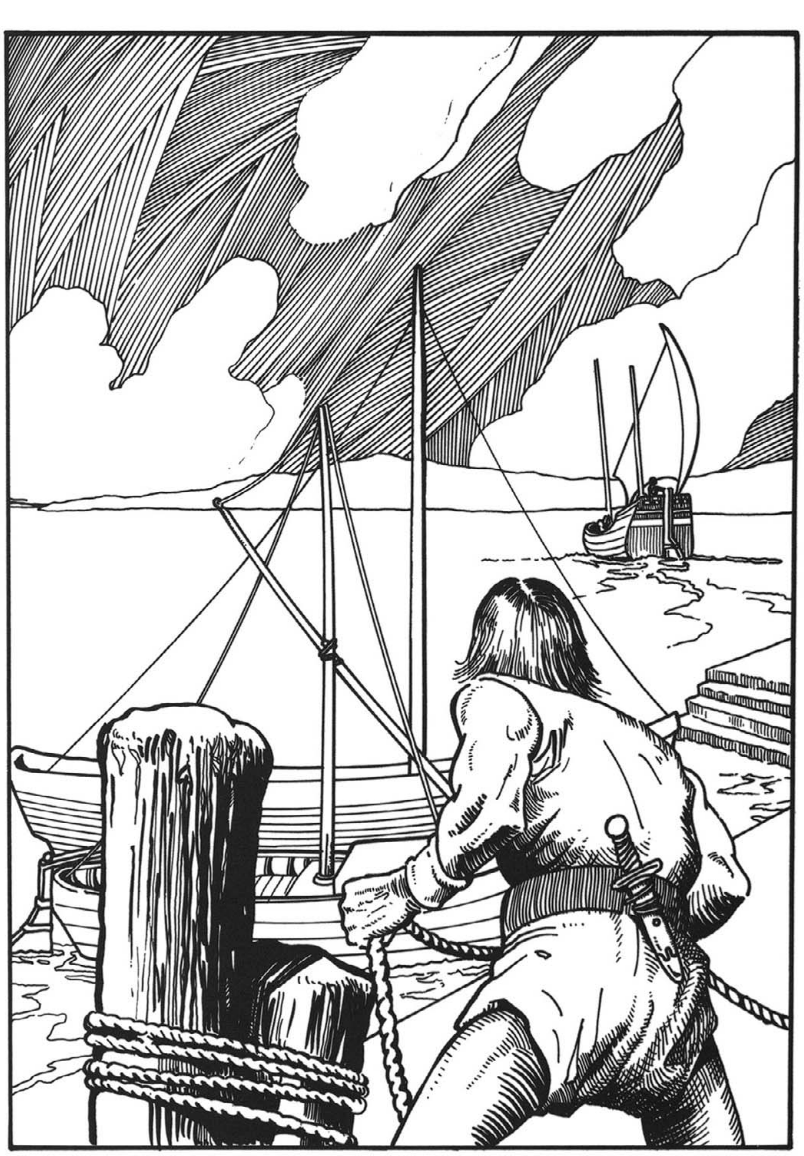
Adventurers in Esgaroth will usually stay in one of the town's six inns. Most are small affairs attached to, but not incorporating, a tavern. They are two stories high, with a high-roofed attic/loft area. The innkeepers generally keep their families in a set of rooms on the second floor. Stores are kept up above, and rooms for travelers and long-staying guests are maintained on the first, and part of the second, floor. The going rate for lodging is about a copper piece a night.

Vodagarazun (Rh. "House of Vodaga")

The Vodagarazun is the largest inn in Esgaroth. Located in the southwestern portion of town, just to the right of the bridge entry, it accomodates a relatively wealthy clientele. Room rates are 2 cp a night, 3 cp with meals, and the guest is given complete privacy. The founder Vodaga was Master during the period T.A. 1591-98, and Kyrn of the city's largest woodcraft Edfreahar; thus, he was able to acquire the location and manpower necessary for such an ambitious project. While most buildings in town are one or two stories with a high roof, the Vodagarazun incorporates a three-story main building and has a four story tower. The tower serves as quarters for the family of the current innkeeper (5th level) Odavacer; his two daughters (16 and 18) live in the upper chambers, while he and his wife stay on the third level. (Odavacer's 4th level son Eodoric lives and serves with the town guard.) Elaborate woodcarving is used to embellish the interior and exterior of the building. This is a common practice in Esgaroth, although most craftsmen use a combination of carving and painting to achieve the desired, albeit crude effect. Vodaga used a number of different woods shipped in from Mirkwood, and had them stained in varying shades. As in all town structures, wood is the principle building material; the Atanathrain voted long ago to restrict stonework to modest chimneys. After all, wooden piers, even those driven into a substantial lake bottom, can only support so much weight.

The Vodagarazun has its own spacious tavern which occupies one quarter of the first and second floors overlooking the lake. Twenty-five oak tables are scattered about the lower common room, and more private booths line a narrow balcony above. The balcony opens onto an exterior second-story porch which is used for guests in warmer months and acts as a food-cooling spot when the winds are cold. The hallmark of the tavern, however, is the great circular bar which surrounds the fireplace in the first level common area. Forty feet in diameter and built of cedar and hickory, this assemblage is used for serving both drinks and victuals. Beers, mead, and watered or spiced wines are prepared both warm and cool. Fish, fowl, and spiced lentil porridge are the house specialties.

The friends of Odavacer are legion, and impromptu music (mostly woodwinds and crude string instruments) is common most evenings. In addition, Waggaeorn and Freaga, two of the town's finest warriors (7th and 6th level respectively) spend most of their nights entertaining ladies and poor gamblers in their special balcony booth. Order in the Vodagarazun is rarely a problem, although Waggaeorn's rude son Breagla (a 2nd level fighter) causes his share of fights. Usually, the altercations stem from Breagla's in-



fatuation with Shagelda, one of the five barmaids and Odavacer's eldest daughter. Like the (5th level) Dorwinion thief Dudannis, the (4th level) Northman bard Raendoric, and the Nûriag mage Urdrath (a 3rd level from Nûrad), Breagla is a semi-permanent resident of the inn and resides in a third floor suite.

Shops and the Harbor

Purchases of goods in Esgaroth usually occur in the central squares which the locals call the Thorbivaga (Rh. "Bay Towns"), the areas surrounding the two Woetsala (Rh. "Market Pools"). Here most of the items indigenous to Rhovanion find their way into the stalls and shops of the wily merchants. Bartering is extremely common here, but a wide variety of "high quality" coins are also accepted. On the rare occasions that the town mints its own small silver piece (a **mietan** is equivalent to ten "great coppers"), coinage is much more common. Generally, prices in Esgaroth are modest for food and lodging, high for certain raw materials, and low for most "finished" items. (See 8.4 for economy summary.) Shops are open from a little after dawn to just before dusk; but merchants will open or close on a whim, particularly when demand dictates. Market days are held each month on the day of the full moon and are characterized by an influx of rural folk bringing in cheap goods for sale or trade. All this is accompanied by entertainment; musicians, bards, magicians, and play-actors hold shop on the Huwaerkyn (Rh. "Great Wharf").

Smuggling

A good deal of illicit trade occurs in Lake Town, a result of the high tariffs rather than any insidious proscriptions. Much is controlled by one Kynoden, the (11th level) head of the town's only boat-building Edfreahar, the Boed-bylgas. Many of the boats designed for trade on the Annen and Celduin are "specially" designed by Kynoden's men, and the grateful recipients find the Boed-bylgas to be effective allies in the cause of profit. Kynoden and his Edfreahar receive twenty-five to fifty percent of the take in town.

These operations are run out of the Erannun (S. "Lone Sunset") inn on the wild west side of Esgaroth. Located right on the water and beside the small, protected boat-building inlet utilized by the Boed-bylgas, this demure one-story tavern is ideal as a shipping area for the illegal furs, gems, and rare elven wines that are favorites of the smugglers. The goods are slid down one of the two movable refuse ramps (the clean one) located in the kitchen of the inn. They are emptied directly onto boats in the inlet. Incoming merchandise arrives as part of the inn's regular food shipments, and is inserted into the bags of ground grain while en route from the mill down the lake.

The Erannun itself contains but three rooms set aside for guests: one with three fur/straw bed shelves able to house six, one with two resting shelves and suitable for four, and a third "single" which is designed for one or two travellers. Each faces directly onto the tavern room and has a single window with bars which can be opened from the inside. The tavern room itself has four finished-pine tables, and is often used as a meeting spot for the eight men who control both the smuggling and the Boed-bylgas. One of them, the (6th level) thief Vogir, stays at the inn nearly every night.

8.132 Action Elsewhere in the Nan Annen

The adventurer will find the Nan Annen (S. "Long Lake Valley") to be generally placid. Most of the Northmen in the region live in Esgaroth or along the western shore of the lake. Another large concentration lives near the two great mills below the Lindal (S. "Mere's End"), the great eighty-foot fall which marks the south boundary of the Annen. On the east side of the lake hearty fishermen and a handful of farmers, hunters, and herders live in relative isolation. No real towns lie in this area; instead, seasonal gatherings provide for unity and trade. Some make occasional pilgrimages to Esgaroth by boat or foot, particularly around the time of the market days. Gramuz (Rh. "Plains-men" or "Plains Northmen") from east of the Nan Annen use the hills as summer pastures for their fine steeds.

Trade on the lake and along the western road is fairly constant, although the Great Plague has made folk a bit more suspicious. Adventurers uninterested in trade, however, will find their greatest challenges among the ruins of the numerous settlements which once dotted the shores of the Annen or sat alongside the Celduin below the Lindal. Ancient Londaroth by the Lindal was once the main town in the region, and began to be replaced by Esgaroth around T.A. 1450. The latter was better protected and offered a better location for water-borne trade. Londaroth had been built because the falls interrupted travel up and down the Celduin, but most sojourners felt the additional time to Esgaroth was tolerable. In addition, Lake Town was more accessible to those bringing goods from the North or overland from the East, especially materials bound for Thranduil's Kingdom. About two hundred people lived in Londaroth as late as T.A. 1635; but the Plague reduced the town to a little over fifty, most of whom have just begun to resettle after fleeing the accursed, unseen enemy. The stone foundations of the old town still exist, however, and some of the buildings (e.g. the old citadel of the Masters) are still very much intact. Current residents live in new or restored houses built of granite and/or limestone and designed in the traditional Northman style (see 5.0).

The miller Viloric (a 5th level thief) and his sister Woedwyn (a 7th level alchemist) are the richest inhabitants of Londaroth. This is primarily due to Viloric's connection to the smuggler Kynoden. Despite the value of their mill to Esgaroth and the other lake communities, its income pales before that derived from the brisk illegal trade.(See 8.16 for more on Woedwyn.)

8.14 ADVENTURES IN THE OPEN COUNTRY

This region encompasses the whole of the plains and hill-land lying between the Celduin and Carnen; it also includes the Nan Celduin and Nan Carnen. Scattered woodland and grasslands predominate, although the river valleys can be relatively lush in places.

8.141 Action in the Hills and on the Rolling Plains

Adventurers traveling along the well-trodden but narrow dirt roads of this territory might be surprised by the amount of traffic. The Plains-Northmen (Rh. "Gramuz") use these arteries to bring their wares westward to Esgaroth and the Men-i-Naugrim, and southward to the river settlements. Occasional groups of well-guarded Dwarves from the Iron Hills or points north also bear goods for market. Most travelers along these routes camp in traditional hollow-sites where well-defined and well-used firepits and grassy bedding spots allow for a little comfort. There are few inns in this part of Rhovanion. Nonetheless, some seek better accomodations among the local Gramuz, and the Northmen are usually willing to provide a paying guest with a spot in the stable, loft, or common room. Larger local taverns regularly allow visitors to stay in outbuildings with the beasts and/or stores. Since the Gramuz are traditionally protective of their own and often suspicious of travelers, access to their villages or homesteads, particularly for non-Northmen, is quite limited. Some villages (Rh. "Maedwe-dukas") which were badly stung by the Plague will refuse (or in isolated cases kill) those perceived as "trespassers."

Raiding

The Gramuz have fewer horses than their brethren the Éothraim (proto-Éorlingas). Both groups, however, suffer from the horse and cattle raiding that has characterized the area for the last few years. Renegade groups of Northmen and Easterlings operate from the local highland valleys and prey on poorly protected herds. Occasionally, these mounted brigands will strike travelers on the roads as well, but these occurrences are generally restricted to folk they view as both weak and wealthy. Both the local lords and the King of Gondor have offered rewards for aid in their quest to bring peace to this land; 10 gp is the standard reward for useful information, and between 3 and 200 gp has be offered for the head of a proven raider. Due to the remoteness of the culprits' lairs, no great military action has been taken against them. In addition, local rumors claim that the strongest of these renegades, Dieraglir of Relmether (reputedly a fourteenth level rogue), has a force of nearly a hundred warriors which operates out of a mysterious and impregnable cave complex in the central hills.

The days when the Éothraim raided each other's herds and encampments have passed, but a few groups of outcasts occasionally attempt the old practice, exciting attacks involving the counting of coup rather than any killing. Among the Northmen, however, the penalty for such a raid is often death, particularly when it involves a nighttime incursion.

8.142 Action in the River Valleys

A number of Northman villages lie in the two great river valleys of eastern Rhovanion. Most of these folk are Plain-smen and reside in the Nan Celduin (S. "Valley of the River Running") below the Lindal. The groups living by the Carnen are more scattered and enjoy smaller settlements. Fishing and riverine trade mark daily life. Travel in these areas is usually safer than that farther north or in the central plains region, and the townsfolk are more used to outsiders. After all, an occasional family from Dorwinion (or even farther east) can be found living by the riverside. Most of the excitement centers around bustling commerce; but an occasional sortie by the nomadic Easterling groups living in the plains east of the Carnen can hasten the heart of even the noblest of warriors. Jyganoth, the (8th level) warlord leader of an especially brutal force which often raids the Nan Carnen (S. "Valley of the Red Water") during cooler months, is considered by many to be their gravest threat.

8.15 ADVENTURING AT EREBOR AND DALE

Erebor (S. "Single Mountain") is the dominant landmark between the Annen and the Ered Mithrin. Although it has neighboring hills and is part of a vast series of ridges, it rises fully 2,500 feet above the surrounding landscape; the peak reaches an elevation of 4,213 feet. Among the ancient Edain and some Northman groups it was revered as a holy place, a site where man could be close to the heavens. This may account, at least in part, for the near-continuous mannish settlement within the shadow of what has always been called the "Lonely Mountain." Dale's origins reach back well into the Second Age, and it's ancestor no doubt had predecessors. The Edain were the first to come here, and their cultural influence remains strong, although the local speech reflects the more recent Northman settlement. As in the elder days, the Erebor region lies on the very frontier of the "settled lands," and the tough lifestyle has acted to unite these groups.

Dale

Dale is a town whose character reflects its rugged location. Built within the protective vale beneath the southern flank of the Lonely Mountain, it has always been sheltered from the harsh winds of northern Rhovanion. The sweep of the narrow but swift headwaters of the Celduin guards the town's eastern approach, and defensive positions have always been maintained on top of the two surrounding mountain spurs. Since Erebor itself presents a formidable barrier on the north side, Dale has rarely been in danger of falling. Even substantially larger forces have given way in the face of the topography.

Stone construction has always been employed here. The building material must be durable in the face of the sometimes cruel weather, and the mountainside has always meant that rock was plentiful. Even the roofs of some buildings are made of stone. Wood for doors, some roofs, and interior work is brought up from the Nan Taurduin and Mirkwood, by way of the Men-i-Erebor (S. "Way of the Single Mountain") or upstream on the Celduin.

Adventurers seeking a fortune (1) in the rich mines of the Ered Mithrin, (2) through booty from Rhûnnish supply trains, (3) from treasures from the

great tombs and holds of old, or (4) at the gaming tables in local taverns will all find Dale a comfortable base of operations. Although small, the town can provide most necessities, as well as a wide variety of weaponry and specialized items for sojourns out into the harsh North. Regular groups of explorers trained in mountaineering and cave exploration meet at their favorite inns and plan monthly trips into the wilds, where they seek to discover new veins of precious ore or ancient deposits of lost booty.

The Lord of Dale is actually a Northman chieftain (the 15th level warrior Eoder) whose bloodline can be traced to the ancient Edain house of Beor. His position is hereditary, but an advisory body composed of old fighters drawn from the local clans acts as a check to any abuses of his power. These Kraethingas (Rh. "War Councilors") actually serve as territorial representatives as well, for the clan holdings, or "Fyrgas," long ago became simple administrative districts with thoroughly mixed populations. Nonetheless, certain families are traditionally chosen to have a seat on the "Kraething;" the warriors (both men and women) who are allowed to vote each midwinter respect tradition. The council meets monthly on the night of no moon, when a little "doom" is in the air. In times of war extraordinary sessions are held.

Eoder's position as "Thyn" has been challenged of late by Jirfelien, the leader of the Aldurlingas clan, a fierce young female mystic who is credited with the slaying of a cold drake which threatened her family's Fyrga in T.A. 1629. Eoder claims that the Aldurlingas are actually worshippers of some perverse "Darkness;" but this claim is quite suspect, for Jirfelien's clan embraces most of the healers found in the Dale area and is known for its "good works." In actuality, Eoder has been mislead by his beloved wife Sulwyn, who is jealous of Jirfelien. Sulwyn's clan, the Dalethеod, also heals folk, but chooses to use a peculiar form of magic. Their claim that Aldurlingas can be construed as "children of an ancient darkness" is based on their own need to hide their own allegiance to the Dark Lord. Perhaps unfortunately, Eoder's powerful Krytheod clan (an Edain group) seems to favor the Daletheod rumors. (See 8.16 for more on Sulwyn.)

The Lonely Mountain

Adventurers seeking the source of the Celduin will find their way to the "Gates of Erebor," a thirty foot waterfall pouring forth from the cave entry on the mountain's south side. Many of the local folk claim that spirits reside in the darkness within, and few have sought entry; but certain spirited explorers realize the truth. Extensive and elaborate natural cavern formations penetrate deep into the bowels of the Lonely Mountain. It will be some time, however (until T.A. 1999), before the Dwarves of Durin come to settle here, and reports of vast wealth locked in the rock beneath Erebor have been greeted with laughter.

A few of the Daletheod know better. At night hand-picked groups make their way up the mountain's west flank and enter through a secret cleft at the 2100 foot level. Once inside, they quietly work the vein of gold which provides for so much of the clan's fortune. The foul beasts which are rumored to live deep within the depths of the land apparently have not bothered them.

Dale's oldest (10th level) and least respected seer Beawyn knows a great deal about Erebor. As a young girl, she and her brother Thealaf explored the cavern complex, delving deep into its lower reaches. When Thealaf was killed going into the mountain alone, Beawyn became hysterical and attributed his demise to a group of demonic "cave drakes." Her parents and the townsfolk thought otherwise, believing it to be a mere fall. Entries into the caves without the permission of the Thyn were banned, and Beawyn's reputation was permanently scarred. Her friendship with an Elfseer called Thorontir (S. "Eagle's Watch") proved invaluable. She is his heir, and knows much of fate's ways.

8.16 ADVENTURING IN THE WESTERN PART OF THE IRON HILLS

Unlike the rich Ered Mithrin, the Emyn Engrin (S. "Iron Hills) holds little in the way of precious metals. Small silver deposits and rare sprinklings of gold do not yield great wealth.

8.161 Action in Dwarven Territory

The excellent iron ore, however, makes the range a worthy source of income. This iron, combined with material from the neighboring tungsten and graphite lodes, allows for the making of superb steels; and the Dwarves of the region derive most of fortunes from the sale of finished metalwork, primarily weaponry, the bulk of which is shipped overland to Esgaroth, the lower Carnen Valley or the Old Ford of the Anduin (along the Men-i-Naugrim). Dwarves are not great fans of boating.

Since T.A. 927 the Dwarves of the tribe of Balli Stonehand have mined portions of the valleys which are the source of the Carnen. (The river is so named for the reddish iron dust which colors its water.) Balli's Folk are part of an eastern Dwarven group. Their leader, Fulla the Second (the 14th level "Demonslayer"), led them into the Iron Hills after a great journey which took over a century and carried them across the northern part of Endor. His son, Fulla III (the 18th level "Hammer of Fire"), presides over seven hundred hearty Dwarves who now work the land. The main site and capital at Azanulinbar-dûm (Kh. "Red Valley Mansion"), called "Azan" by most knowledgeable folk in Rhovanion, houses three quarters of the population. The rest live at Barak-shathûr (Kh. "Axe Mountain") and are led by young Azaghal, the (11th level) great-grandson of Fulla's brother Zigli (Ryk). It was Azaghal who acted as an envoy to Durin's Folk and made the pilgrimage to Khazad-dûm (Kh. "Dwarf Mansion") in T.A. 1580, thus establishing a trade link and bond of friendship which was to last over a thousand years.

8.162 The Men of the Iron Hills

The northern and eastern sections of the Iron Hills are dominated by two groups of men.

The Sagath

The first and largest group are the Sagath, a tribe of Easterlings associated with the Talathoth (S. "Plains Host") of Wood-elf tales. The Sagath are actually from the eastern shores of the Sea of Rhûn, and act as guardians of Sauron's precious supply road running from Rhûn to Angmar. Led by the fierce (12th level) Huz of Amov, these mounted warriors patrol the lower hills along the northern flank of the Emyn Engrin. "Intruding" parties are either killed or blinded and sent home. The latter practice is used to stay further incursions, and has been most effective. Sagath horsemen are most active during the warmer months, when the wagon trains are on the road westward; but their vigil is constant enough to make any time dangerous. Huz's men operate in units of five called "Yunovi" (Sa. sing. "Yunom")— traditionally a force of three (2nd-3rd level), moderately armored spearmen, one light (2nd-4th level) horse-archer, and a (3rd-5th level) tracker. They use small, but rugged mounts. A total of about forty Yunovi reside with a fifty-man support force at the rude citadel of Lar-huz (Sa. "Place of Huz"). Few speak any Rhovanion or Elven tongues, for diplomacy is not a part of their lifestyle.

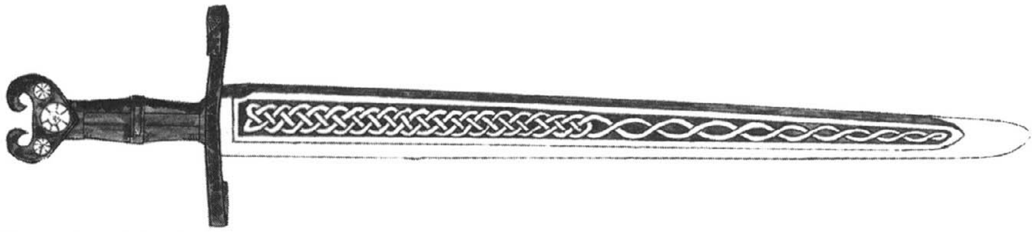
The Cult of the Long Night

The second mannish group in the region lives in a secluded vale ten miles southeast of Lar-huz. There are a secretive bunch, ten animistic Northman shamens of the Cult of the Long Night. Servants of Sauron, they preside over the teaching of the Dark Religion in eastern Rhovanion. Their adherents journey into the highlands on the nights of no moon to learn ways of mysticism, astrology, and sorcery at a place called Nan Morsereg (S. "Vale of Black Blood"). Woedwyn of Lindal and Sulwyn of Dale have often been among these followers. The Nan Morsereg is only a place of learning, and the real hold of the Ten is located in the cliffs above; it is a grouping of twelve dome-shaped "hives" of stone set upon a ledge beneath an overhang of pitch-black rock. Two of the halls are sixty feet in diameter, multi-roomed structures for meetings, the libraries, and the stores. The other ten are the individual quarters for the cult.

The Ten call themselves Maeghirrim (S. "Piercing Lords") and wear long robes of white linen lined with black cloth made from human hair. Beneath this garb are the varied clothes one would associate with so diverse a group. For instance, Orduclax the "Tar-Maeghir" and leader, is a (17th level) sorcerer and favors light clothing; small, finely worked leather belt pouches and a black teak and silver staff are his only burdens. On the other hand, Orduclax's lieutenant— Daeg-udra— is actually a (13th level) warrior, and wears a carefully hidden breastplate of beautifully etched black steel beneath his robes; and the appearance of his reinforced leggings belie their strength. Daeg-udra carries an invisible broadsword. The other eight Maeghirrim are listed below:

NAME	LVL	PROFESSION	STATUS
Orduclax	17	Sorcerer	Lord of the Ten.
Daeg-udra	13	Fighter	Orduclax's high guard.
Haed	10	Rogue	Assassin and envoy.
Thraear (F)	11	Mystic	Keeper of Nan Morsereg.
Broehir	12	Astrologer	Keeper of Visions.
Freahar	10	Magician	Keeper of Fires.
Edwodyn	9	Animist	Master of the Living.
Freowyn (F)	9	Cleric	Mistress of the Dead.
Breor	8	Sorcerer	Master of Dusts.
Brego	7	Ranger	Watcher of Trails.

The Maeghir rogue Haed occasionally journeys westward to the hilly lands on the central Rhovanion plain. There he deals with various raiding parties and renegade groups, and makes sure that the trouble they bring to the land is continual. His influence dictates the course of many a raid, and Haed will often stand by to trade for particularly interesting booty. By this means he acquired his beautiful Elven servant girl— Narmirë of Celebannon (see 8.121 above). Haed's capabilities as a rider, warrior, and thief are legend; and he serves as Orduclax's (10th level) assassin.



8.2 COMBAT CAPABILITY SUMMARIES

8.21 MASTER MILITARY CHART (Avg Stats & Levels)

TYPE/RANK	HOME/RACE	#	LVL	HITS	AT(DB)	SHIELD	MELEE OB	MISSILE OB	NOTES
URUK-ERAG	**CIRITH MITHLIN (ERED MITHRIN)**								
Uruk Command	Uruk-hai	6	9	115	14(-40)	Y10	115bs	75sb	Use poison Asgurash.
Lurg Leaders	Lesser Orc	16	6	70	13(-30)	Y	80sc	50sb	Take noses.
Warriors	Lesser Orc	48	3	45	8(-20)	Y	50sc	20sb	Some use pole arms.
Young Warriors	Lesser Orc	170	2	35	7(-0)	N	40pa	10sb	Some use axes or scimitars.
LOR-URUK-SHAB	**CIRITH HIMNIENOR (ERED MITHRIN)**								
Uruk Command	Uruk-hai	9	9	110	16	N	120ba	60sb	Use poison Asgurash.
High Lurg Guard	Lesser Orc	6	7	90	13(-35)	Y5	85ha	45sb	Guard Cro closely.
Lurg Leaders	Lesser Orc	46	3	50	7(-20)	Y	55sc	10sb	Some use hand axes.
Warriors	Lesser Orc	142	2	40	7(-20)	Y	40sc	5sb	Some use pole arms.
Young Warriors	Lesser Orc	90	1	30	5(-0)	N	25pa	-25	Some use sc and shield.
ASHARAG	**SOUTHERN FOOTHILLS (ERED MITHRIN)**								
Uruk Command	Uruk-hai	12	10	120	16(-30)	Y10	120bs	90sb	Behead fallen enemies.
Guard Band	Uruk-hai	20	6	75	14(-0)	N	90th	60sb	Can use bs and shield.
Band Leaders	Lesser Orc	20	6	70	13(-20)	Y	80ha	45sb	Ride wolves. Have spears.
Good Warriors	Lesser Orc	20	5	60	8(-20)	Y	70sc	30sb	Can ride wolves.
Warriors	Lesser Orc	130	3	40	7(-0)	N	50sp	5sb	Some use sc and shield.
Young Warriors	Lesser Orc	120	2	35	7(-0)	N	40pa	-25	Some use spears.
War Wolves	Great Wolf	100	4	115	3(-30)	N	LBi75	—	Very fast; fast if ridden.
WOOD-ELVES	**THRANDUIL'S FOLK (MIRKWOOD)**								Generally fine trackers.
Masters	Council Sindarin	12	12	115	18(-50)*	Y15	130bs	135lb	Thranduil's inner circle.
King's Guard	Mixed Elf	24	10	105	17(-45)*	Y10	120bs	125lb	Guard Thranduil closely.
Cururim	Mixed Elf	9	10	90	1(-50)	Y10	60bs	5lb	Rangers. 4 spell lists.
Tirduin Lords	Mixed Elf	12	9	100	13(-50)*	Y10	110bs	115lb	Act as unit commanders.
Tirduin	Mixed Elf	96	6	85	13(-40)*	Y5	90bs	95lb	Elite warriors.
Ciuvetpel Lords	Mixed Elf	10	5	70	1(-40)	Y5	80bs	85lb	Lead forest patrols.
Exp. Cuiv. War.	Silvan-elf	30	3	45	1(-35)	Y	60bs	75lb	Expert trackers/stalkers
Cuiv. Warriors	Silvan Elf	50	2	35	1(-30)	Y	45bs	60lb	Serve as couriers.
Tauranca Lords	Silvan Elf	11	4	60	13(-30)	Y	75bs	75lb	Main battle-troop leaders.
Tauranca War.	Silvan Elf	66	3	45	13(-25)	Y	60bs	65lb	Main battle-troops.
Young Taur. War.	Silvan Elf	22	2	35	13(-20)	Y	50bs	50lb	Green troops.
BEIJABAR	**MIRKWOOD**								Highly dispersed.
Lords (Man-form)	Northman	5	20	165	10(-30)*	N	160ba	160lb	Some can shape-change.
(Bear-form)	—	2	20	240	8(-50)*	N	LBa 120	—	Large creature crit table.
Warriors	Northman	100	4	75	9(-20)	N	80ba	75lb	Some use ha and shield.
WOOD-MEN	**MIRKWOOD**								Wander over whole of wood.
Lords	Northman	5	11	120	5(-50)*	Y15	125ha	120lb	Some use battle-axes.
Exp. Warriors	Northman	50	5	70	5(-30)	Y	80ha	80lb	All are fine trackers.
Warriors	Northman	120	3	50	1(-30)	Y	50ha	40lb	Some use maces.
Young Warriors	Northman	70	2	30	1(-25)	Y	40ha	30lb	Some use clubs or maces.
URUK-THANG	**EMYN-I-THANG (MIRKWOOD)**								
Troll Guard	Olog-hai	5	10	165	11(-25)	N	165ba	—	Use large creature crit.
Lurg Commanders	Uruk-hai	30	6	75	16(-30)	Y5	85ma	50sb	Can ride war wolves.
Exp. Warriors	Lesser Orc	45	3	45	13(-20)	Y	55sc	25sb	Some use hand axes.
Warriors	Lesser Orc	90	2	35	8(-20)	Y	40sc	5sb	Some carry spears.
Young Warriors	Lesser Orc	45	1	25	7(-0)	N	30sp	-25	Some use sc and shield.
War Wolves	Great Wolf	30	4	115	3(-30)	N	LBi75	—	Very fast; fast if ridden.
GARRISON	**SARN GORIWING (MIRKWOOD)**								
Dindae	Demon?	1	17	170	1(-100)*	N	180da	150da	Hides +50. Uses poison "Ondohithui." +10 Ambush.
Exp. Uruks	Uruk-hai	5	6	95	19(-25)	Y	95ha	30sb	Also 85ba (slung).
Uruk Warriors	Uruk-hai	12	3	55	18(-20)	Y	65bs	10sb	Also 55th (slung).
Young Uruks	Uru-hai	12	2	40	16(-0)	N	50ba	5sb	Also carry bs and shield.
SHIRKAG	**NAN GULDUIN (MIRKWOOD)**								
Tribe Lords	Lesser Orc	2	10	100	6(-30)	Y10	95sc	45sp	Eat prisoners immediately.
Exp. Warriors	Lesser Orc	15	5	65	5(-20)	Y	70sc	35sp	Also carry short garrotes.
Warriors	Lesser Orc	13	3	40	1(-25)	Y	50sc	25sp	2 short throwing spears.
LAKE-MEN	**ESGAROTH UPON LONG LAKE**								
Guard Lord	Northman	1	13	139	15(-35)	Y10	125ma	105cp	Commands town guard.
War Lord	Northman	1	14	142	15(-40)	Y10	130bs	135cp	Commands army outside town.
Elite Guard	Northman	15	7	95	15(-25)	Y	100bs	100sp	Mounted outside town.
Guard	Northman	45	4	65	13(-25)	Y	75bs	70cp	Standing town guard.
Guard Levy	Northman	90	2	30	13(-20)	Y	40bs	45sp	Train monthly for 2 days.

TYPE/RANK	HOME/RACE	#	LVL	HITS	AT(DB)	SHIELD	MELEE OB	MISSILE OB	NOTES
PLAINSMEN	**RHOVANION PLAIN**								
War Lords	Northman	5	11	125	16(-30)	Y10	120ml	100sp	Heavy cavalry.
(war horses)	–	–	4	165	3(-30)	–	LTr60	–	Unarmored. Very fast.
Warriors	Northman	75	3	50	16(-20)	Y	65ml	50sp	Heavy cavalry.
(heavy horses)	–	–	3	150	3(-20)	–	LTr50	–	Unarmored. Fast.
Warrior Levy	Northman	150	2	40	13(-20)	Y	50sp	45sp	Medium cavalry.
(medium horses)	–	–	3	130	3(-10)	–	MTr50	–	Unarmored. Fast.
DALE-MEN	**DALE**								
Clan Lords	High Northman	5	12	130	19(-10)*	N	125ba	110sp	Fight mounted or on foot.
(war horses)	–	–	4	170	3(-40)	–	LTr65	–	Lightly armored. Fast.
Elite Warriors	High Northman	25	5	70	15(-25)	Y	90bs	85cp	Fight mounted or on foot.
(medium horses)	–	–	3	150	3(-15)	–	MTr55	–	Unarmored. Fast.
Warriors	High Northman	60	3	50	14(-25)	Y	70bs	65cp	Experienced levy. 55sp.
Warrior Levy	High Northman	100	2	45	13(-25)	Y	55bs	50cp	Well-trained. 40sp.
BALLI'S FOLK	**EMYN ENGRIN**								
Lords	Khazâd	2	11	125	20(-55)*	Y10	135wh	100hcb	Mithril chain + overshirt.
Dwarven Guard	Khazâd	28	7	95	17(-50)*	Y5	100wh	85hcb	4 x 7. Mithril shirts.
Warriors	Khazâd	140	4	65	16(-35)*	Y	80ha	60lcb	70 active at any time.
Dwarven Levy	Khazâd	140	2	40	16(-25)	Y	55ha	40sb	Each serves indiv warrior.
SAGATH	**EMYN ENGRIN**								
Headmen	Common Man	2	8	95	15(-40)*	Y10	105sp	100sb	Carry two javelins (95ja).
(medium horses)	–	–	3	140	3(-15)	–	MTr50	–	Very fast.
Headmens'. Trackers	Common Man	15	4	45	1(-40)	Y10	55ss	55cp	Rangers. 2 spell lists.
Horse Archers	Common Man	15	3	45	1(-10)	N	50sp	70sb	Can fire riding away.
Spearmen	Common Man	45	3	45	13(-20)	Y	65ja	65ja	Use short spears (ja).
(light horses)	–	–	2	110	3(-25)	–	MTr35	–	Very fast. Normal mounts.
Swordsmen	Common Man	10	2	40	13(-20)	Y	50ss	15sb	Footsoldiers.
Slingers	Common Man	10	2	35	1(-10)	N	20ss	55sl	Footsoldiers.
BRIGANDS	**VARIOUS PLACES**								
Use mix of Northman, High Northman, and Common Man types.									

CODES AND COMMENTS:

a) Uruk-hai and Olog-hai can operate freely in daylight. Lesser orcs fight with a subtraction of -100 in true daylight and -25 in magical or enchanted daylight; normal artificial light will not bother them. Hungry orcs may eat the enemy and/or their own dead. Stone trolls turn to stone in real or magical daylight. Other lesser trolls operate as lesser orcs.

b) Shields equal to 20 or 25 or DB. An * means armor is magical or specially made.

c) Note defensive bonuses include stats. and shield. Shield references include quality bonus(e.g. "Y5" means "yes, a +5 shield"). See section 1.3 for explanation of stat. adds, armor types, spells, and other bonuses. Combatants untrained in a type of weaponry (e.g. orcs untrained in missile combat) suffer a penalty of -25 when attacking. Melee and missile offensive bonuses include the bonus for the combatant's best weapon in that category.

d) Weapon abbreviations follow OBs: ss—short sword, bs—broadsword, sc—scimitar, th—two hand sword, ma—mace, ha—hand axe, wh—war hammer, ba—battle axe, wm—war mattock, cl—club, qs—quarter staff, da—dagger, sp—spear, ml—mounted lance, ja—javelin, pa—pole arm, sl—sling, cp—composite bow, sb—short or horse bow, lb—long bow, lcb—light cross bow, hcb—heavy crossbow, bo—bola, ts—throwing star. Animal attacks are abbreviated using code from "beast chart" (see Chart 8.22).

e) Unless otherwise stated, mounted troops have fully effective OBs when fighting from horse.

f) The Dwarven warriors are the only group who wear their armor during most or all of their waking hours. Other groups wear theirs during specific duty hours or in times of war. Even the dwarven levy wears some armor while awake.

g) Dwarves wear cruel-looking helms which have cowls (masks) resembling stylized horned beasts. Other groups rarely wear helms with face masks, although some Beijabar, Sagath, and Dale-man lords enjoy the additional protection.

8.22 BEASTS OF NORTHERN WILDERAND (Avg Stats)

Type	Level	#	Sz/Sd	Hits	AT	DB	Attack Modes and OB's: Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Other	Crit Table
Active Tree	25	1	vl/vs	400	20	0	HGr 20	HCr 10	Both 90	Varies	Large
Bat	1	1-100	s/vf	5	1	60	SBi 25	–	–	TCl 30	Norm
Black Bear	5	1-5	m/f	150	4	20	LGr 50	LCl 50	MBa 30	MBi 25	Norm
Cave Drake	24	1	m/m	275	19	30	HCl 120	HGr 100	HBi 90	HCr 60	S. Large
Eagle	3	1-4	s/f	30	1	30	MCl 45	SPi 35	–	–	Norm
Fell Beast	20	1-2	l/f	240	12	50	HCl 90	LGr 90	LBa 90	LBi 60	Large
Giant	20	1-3	vl/s	350	11	30	HBa 175	HCr 100	–	Club 150	Large
Giant Spider	18	1-20	l/f	150	4	40	HSt 75	LGr 60	LBi 75	–	Large
Great Bat	5	1-20	m/vf	60	3	60	MBi 75	MCl 60	–	–	Norm
Great Bear	10	1-4	l/f	200	8	40	LBa 90	LCl 75	LGr 75	LBi 50	Large
Great Eagle	30	1-10	vl/vf	300	11	90	HCl 120	LPi 100	–	LBa 100	Large
L. Cave Dr.	16	1-3	m/f	200	12	30	LCl 100	LGr 90	LBi 60	LCr 50	Large
Lesser Giant	14	1-5	l/s	250	11	20	LBa 90	LCr 65	–	Club 75	Large
Stone Troll	15	1-5	l/s	175	11	25	HBa 120	LCl 120	LCr 90	LBi 80	Large
Warg	8	4-20	l/vf	180	4	60	LBi 75	LCl 60	Both 50	–	Norm
Wight*	7	1-10	m/m	100	1	75	100bs	MBa 55	–	MBi 25	Norm
Wolf	3	2-40	m/vf	110	3	30	LBi 60	–	–	MCl 30	Norm

CODES: Sz/Sd = Size and Speed respectively; 1st symbol: s—small, m—medium, l—large, vl—very large, h—huge; 2nd symbol: s—slow, m—medium, f—fast, vf—very fast.

Attack Modes and OB's = 1st letter: T—tiny, S—small, M—medium, L—large, H—huge; 2nd letters: Ba—bash, Bi—bite, Cl—claw, Cr—crush, Gr—grapple, Pi—beak or pincher, Tt—tiny teeth; Number equals offensive bonus using given attack mode. Categories reflect probability beast will use given mode; e.g. "primary" most probable, "other" least likely; "both" attacks are made only where a successful primary attack occurred in the preceding round.

Crit Table = Type of table used when critical strike is to be resolved against the creature. Normal table is that used for man-sized creatures and beasts of like vulnerability; large and super large creature critical tables reflect increased protection.

*Wights can only be damaged by enchanted or magic weapons; 100bs means +100 OB with broadsword. 8.21

8.23 DRAGONS OF THE ERED MITHRIN

Name	Type	Level	Sz/Sd	Hits	AT	DB	OB Bite	OB Claw	OB Bash	Breath	Color
AGBURANAR	CD(L)	31	m/vf	463	20	50	120	130	110	none	black
ANDO-ANCA	CD(L)	49	m/f	540	20	40	150	120	115	none	red
ANGURTH	FD(F)	36	l/f	471	16	60	110	125	115	60/100	black/gold
BAIRANAX	CD(F)	34	l/f	447	16	50	140	120	100	none	brown/red
CULGOR	CD(L)	30	m/vf	401	16	40	120	130	105	none	red/gold
DAELOMIN	CD(F)	33	l/f	428	16	45	100	120	110	none	black
DYNCA	CD(F)	35	l/vf	422	12	70	125	135	95	none	black/grey
HAURNFIL	CD(L)	33	l/vf	456	20	55	115	125	130	none	red
HYARLEUCA	CD(L)	28	s/vf	329	12	60	90	100	85	none	brown
ITANGAST	FD(L)	55	h/f	590	20	60	160	110	135	50/90	black/blue
KLYAXAR	CD(L)	29	s/vf	365	12	65	95	105	95	none	brown/red
KHUZADREPA	CD(F)	37	l/m	460	16	60	130	100	160	none	black
LEUCARUTH	FD(L)	34	l/f	435	16	50	125	135	100	50/90	red
LOMAW	CD(L)	35	l/vf	467	20	50	120	125	90	40/100	grey
NIMANAUR	CD(L)	33	m/f	451	16	60	90	100	85	45/95	black/grey
RUINGURTH	FD(L)	36	l/s	495	20	30	100	95	95	50/100	red/brown
SCATHA	CD(L)	52	vl/vf	555	20	65	150	140	120	none	red
SMAUG	FD(F)	66	l/vf	636	20	75	125	130	150	60/120	red/gold
THROKMAW	FD(F)	46	l/f	523	16	60	110	120	125	50/100	black
URUIAL	FD(L)	30	m/m	439	16	55	105	115	100	50/90	red

Codes: **Types** = 1st symbol: CD — cold drake, FD — fire drake; 2nd symbol: L — land-bound (wingless), F — flying (winged).

Sz/Sd = Size/Speed; 1st symbol: s — slow, m — medium, l — large, vl — very large, h — huge; 2nd symbol: s — slow, m — medium, f — fast, vf — very fast.

Breath OB = Attack bonus with breath weapon appropriate for given type; 1st symbol: OB vs center of a wide target area (impact points outside of center subject to no OB; 2nd symbol: OB vs single target. Note that speeds are measured against the norm for dragons. See sections 4.0 and 8.113 for more on dragons.

8.24 MASTER NPC CHART

NAME	LVL	HITS	AT	DB	SHIELD	MELEE OB	MISSILE OB	CHARACTER NOTES
ered mithrin								
SHAGRATH	13	137	19	30	Y10	135ha	90sb	Uruk-hai fighter. Uses Asgurash on weapons. SD55, Co100, Ag92, Me77, Re89, St100, Qu84, Pr92, In83, Em20
CRO	14	141	16	10*	N	145ba	85sb	Uruk-hai fighter. Uses Brithagurth on arrows. SD76, Co97, Ag93, Me45, Re66, St99, Qu59, Pr88, In38, Em22
UKOG THE LAME	15	154	16	40*	Y10	155bs	100sb	Uruk-hai fighter. Peculiar walk. Savors brains. SD86, Co100, Ag40, Me97, Re79, St98, Qu42, Pr55, In100, Em36
wood-elf realm								
THRANDUIL	33	140	17	75*	Y20	150bs	175lb	Sindarin fighter. Spells: 3/Animist10, 3/Illusionist10, 2/Gen Essence10. x3 Ring. 66PP. Boots of Limb-running. Bow of orc-slaying. Helm of Shadows/Hiding. Sword of troll-slaying. SD84, Co96, Ag100, Me93, Re91, St98, Qu99, Pr96, In95, Em97
OHTAR	21	130	17	65*	Y10	145bs	160lb	Sindarin fighter. Spells: 1/Gen Essence10. SD64, Co94, Ag100, Me88, Re87, St97, Qu100, Pr91, In96, Em90
CAMTHALION	17	120	17	60*	Y10	140bs	155lb	Silvan fighter. Stone of Water Walking. +25da. SD52, Co91, Ag99, Me89, Re76, St98, Qu99, Pr87, In93, Em91
HELADIL	8	91	13	50*	Y10	95bs	120lb	Sindarin fighter. Shield of Concealment +25 hiding. SD47, Co90, Ag100, Me90, Re94, St98, Qu99, Pr79, In93, Em92
emyn-nu-fuin								
LHACHGLIN	27	127	1	40*	N	60ss	65da	Edain animist. +20 Cloak. Dagger of Elf-slaying. +6 Ring. 81PP. Orb of Plant Control. Ring of Invis. Spells: 1/Animist25, 5/Animist20, 10/Gen Channeling10, 2/Gen Channeling20, 2/Evil Cleric10. SD83, Co76, Ag99, Me97, Re98, St84, Qu96, Pr30, In100, Em97
WODURISHAK	18	181	11	30*	N	185ba	—	Olog-hai fighter. Helm of Rear-sight. +10ss. SD47, Co91, Ag88, Me51, Re55, St100, Qu98, Pr40, In73, Em29
nan gulduin								
DRURGANGRA	14	154	13	10	N	150th	35sb	Uruk-hai fighter. Helm of Rear-sight. +10ss. SD47, Co91, Ag88, Me51, Re55, St100, Qu98, Pr40, In73, Em29
esgaroth								
ODAGAVIA	12	96	10	25	Y	80bs	95cp	Northman merchant/fighter. Master of Esgaroth. SD93, Co76, Ag73, Me88, Re92, St79, Qu77, Pr91, In94, Em90
ODAVACER	5	48	6	25	Y	55ma	65cp	Northman innkeeper/fighter. Bow of Orc-slaying. SD96, Co88, Ag87, Me79, Re68, St81, Qu78, Pr44, In95, Em93
EODORIC	4	63	13	25	Y	75bs	75cp	Northman fighter. Often on lake with boat patrol. SD67, Co93, Ag90, Me73, Re64, St90, Qu86, Pr54, In70, Em62
WAGGEORN	7	97	13	35	Y5	95bs	100cp	Northman fighter. "Retired" from Elite Guard. SD31, Co90, Ag93, Me61, Re73, St94, Qu92, Pr59, In68, Em26
FREAGA	6	92	13	25	Y	90ma	90cp	Northman fighter. Uses 90da coated with Ondokamba. SD45, Co92, Ag90, Me55, Re61, St92, Qu89, Pr62, In44, Em29
BREAGLA	2	41	13	25	Y	55wh	40cp	Northman fighter. Son of Waggaeorn. Guard levy-man. SD23, Co90, Ag94, Me41, Re47, St95, Qu90, Pr83, In51, Em23
SHAGELDA	3	17	1	25	N	5da	5da	Northman sorceress. x2 Earring. 6PP. Spells: 4/Sorcerer10. Cloak of Dispelling (5th lvl). SD50, Co51, Ag90, Me73, Re89, St90, Qu98, Pr99, In98, Em100
RAENDORIC	4	34	1	30	W5	40ss	35lb	Northman bard. +2 Staff. Lute of Sleep(V). 12PP. Main gauche +5. Boots of Silence. Flute of Projection. Spells: 5/Bard10, 1/Gen Essence5, 1/Gen Mentalism5. SD49, Co70, Ag97, Me99, Re84, St91, Qu96, Pr67, In60, Em100
DUDANNIS	5	37	1	40	W	65ss	65da	Dorwinion thief. Main gauche. Ring of Perception +20. Hood of Facades. Belt of Levitation (1mph). SD77, Co45, Ag99, Me85, Re95, St73, Qu100, Pr37, In86, Em64
URDRATH	3	28	1	15	N	10da	5da	Nûriag magician. x2 Staff. 9PP. Spells: 3/Evil Magician10, 1/Gen Essence10. Book of Charming Kind. SD76, Co43, Ag82, Me77, Re89, St78, Qu96, Pr67, In90, Em100

NAME	LVL	HITS	AT	DB	SHIELD	MELEE OB	MISSILE OB	CHARACTER NOTES
smugglers								
KYNODEN	11	66	1	40	W10	90bs	90da	Northman thief/boat builder. Invisible Dagger of Returning. Boots of Landing/Silence. Shadow Cloak. +1 Ring of Evasions. Spells: 1/Gen Mentalist5. SD65, Co69, Ag99, Me78, Re83, St94, Qu97, Pr88, In89, Em55
VOGIR	6	45	1	20	N	75ss	60cp	Northman thief. Ring of Water-breathing. SD68, Co56, Ag98, Me81, Re87, St89, Qu99, Pr40, In76, Em43
lindal								
WOEDWYN	7	28	1	15	N	15da	5da	Northman alchemist (female). x3 Crucible. 21PP. Spells: 5/Alchemy 10, 1/Evil Magician 10, SD34, Co64, Ag98, Me98, Re96, St88, Qu96, Pr63, In72, Em100
VILORIC	5	39	1	20	N	85ha	90ha	Northman thief/miller. +15 Throwing-axe (returns). SD60, Co53, Ag100, Me70, Re72, St86, Qu98, Pr51, In67, Em81
open country								
DIERAGLIR	14	124	1	55	Y10	130wh	130cp	Northman rogue. Bow of Man-slaying. Helm +25RR. SD33, Co61, Ag98, Me67, Re69, St98, Qu100, Pr80, In56, Em40
JYGANOTH	8	105	15	30	Y10	100ha	100sb	Easterling fighter. Coats arrows with Asgurash. SD65, Cm92, Ag90, Me45, Re97, St97, Qu69, Pr88, In59, Em34
dale & erebor								
EODER	15	157	19	10*	N	145ba	140sp	Northman/Edain fighter. Thyn of Dale. Spear of Dragon-slaying. Horse Mastery Helm (+25 Control). SD82, Co77, Ag98, Me71, Re86, St99, Qu90, Pr91, In83, Em80
JIRFELIEN	7	28	1	25	N	25da	5da	Northman mystic (female). Clan leader. +3 Ring. 14PP. Spells: 6/Mystic 10, 3/Gen Mentalism 10. Orb of Confusing Ways. Cloak of Invisibility/Leaping. SD78, Co54, Ag98, Me78, Re99, St90, Qu100, Pr99, In80, Em99
SULWYN	5	26	1	15	N	20ss	5cp	Northman lay healer (female). Wife of Eoder. x2 Wand. 10PP. Spells: 5/Lay healer 10, 1/Evil Mental 10. SD80, Co50, Ag82, Me79, Re90, St83, Qu96, Pr96, In83, Em92
BEAWYN	10	42	1	10	N	40sp	10sp	Northman seer (female). Spear of Troll-slaying. x2 Necklace. 20PP. Spells: 6/Seer 10, 9/Mentalism 10. SD99, Co62, Ag98, Me88, Re90, St94, Qu90, Pr99, In87, Em65
dwarf territory								
FULLA III	18	145	20	25*	N	165ba	130hcb	Dwarf fighter. Lord. Armor wears as AT15, +10RR and DB. Battle-axe of Shield-slaying (halves foes' shields). Horn of Fear (20th lvl). Heavy crossbow reloads ½ rds. Hammer of Returning (100', OB90). SD81, Co98, Ag96, Me98, Re82, St100, Qu92, Pr83, In77,E m69
AZAGHAL	11	125	20	55*	Y10	135wh	100hcb	Dwarf fighter. Lesser lord. Armor wears as AT15. SD77, Co92, Ag78, Me94, Re89, St98, Qu90, Pr84, In79, Em70
iron hills								
HUZ OF AMOV	12	124	15	45*	Y15	125sp	120sb	Sagath fighter. Great Headman. Spear of Man-slaying. SD91, Co91, Ag99, Me56, Re79, St99, Qu97, Pr66, In84, Em96
maeghirrim								
ORDUCLAX	17	53	1	20	N	40ss	15da	Northman sorcerer. Orb of Dark Summons. Returning Dagger of Dwarf-slaying. Boots of Leaving. x3 Staff of Lightning. 51PP. Spells: 2/Gen Essence5, 11/Gen Channeling10, 6/Sorcerer10, 1/Evil Magician10. SD50, Co41, Ag95, Me96, Re95, St60, Qu98, Pr90, In100, Em100
DAEG-UDRA	13	144	18	30	Y10	145bs	125cp	Northman fighter. +20 invisible broadsword. SD86, Co90, Ag81, Me31, Re78, St100, Qu75, Pr30, In55, Em62
HAED	10	91	13	40	Y10	120ss	130da	Northman rogue. +10 Dagger of Returning. Coats short sword with Ondokamba. Helm of facades. Boots of Horse Mastery (+50 to control and ride). Uses raven called "Kryda" as spy and messenger. Spells: 1/Gen Mentalism5. +1 Spell Storing Ring. SD76, Co71, Ag100, Me56, Re89, St99, Qu91, Pr90, In74, Em92
THRAEAR	11	38	1	15	N	20da	20da	Northman mystic (female). x3 Orb of Mind Domination. +1 Wand of Fear. 22PP. Spells: 6/Mystic10, 6/Gen Mentalism10, 1/Evil Mentalist5. Cloak of Hiding. SD34, Co37, Ag90, Me98, Re99, St72, Qu97, Pr100, In56, Em97
BROEHIR	12	35	1	20*	N	25da	10da	Northman astrologer. x2 Cube of Starsense (20th lvl). +2 Nose Ring. 24PP. Spells: 3/Astrologer20, 3/Astrologer10, 5/Gen Channeling10, 1/Evil Cleric5. SD45, Co22, Ag80, Me88, Re86, St76, Qu90, Pr97, In100, Em45
FREAHAR	10	33	1	10	N	15ss	10da	Northman magician. x3 Staff of Fire Bolts. Boots of Leaving (2/day). Spells: 5/Evil Magician10, 9/Gen Essence10, 1/Magician10. 20PP. Book of Fire Law (20th lvl). +5 Returning Dagger of Man-slaying. SD45, Co49, Ag76, Me95, Re97, St45, Qu91, Pr44, In66, Em98
EDWODYN	9	56	1	15	N	45ha	20cp	Northman animist. +4 Ring of Animal Mastery. 27PP. Spells: 6/Animist10, 7/Gen Channeling10. SD34, Co99, Ag77, Me98, Re85, St50, Qu96, Pr87, In100, Em97
FREOWYN	9	59	9	40	Y10	50ma	25lb	Northman cleric (female). +3 Ring of Sound's Way. 9PP. Spells: 5/Evil Cleric10, 8/Gen Channeling10. Book of Necromancy (25th lvl). Shield of Shadows. SD69, Co78, Ag87, Me94, Re93, St98, Qu96, Pr96, In94, Em80
BREOR	8	26	1	15	N	10da	10da	Northman sorcerer. x2 Staff of Mind Destruction. 16PP. Hood acts as helm. Spells: 5/Sorcerer10, 1/Evil Magician5, 6/Gen Channeling10. Pain Rune. SD70, Co65, Ag78, Me89, Re99, St59, Qu96, Pr45, In97, Em97
BREGO	7	66	1	60	Y20	65ha	60lb	Northman ranger. +20 Invisible shield. Helm of Dark-sight. Boots of Landing. +3 Ring. 7PP. Spells: 3/Ranger10. Horn of Wolf Summoning (15th lvl/day). SD77, Co99, Ag98, Me67, Re86, St94, Qu99, Pr70, In93, Em86
elf slave								
NAMIRË	2	18	1	10	N	10bs	10lb	Silvan healer (female). Unarmed. 4PP. Spells: 3/Healer5. SD56, Co71, Ag91, Me97, Re93, St64, Qu92, Pr95, In97, Em66
mirkwood								
LEGOLAS	8	94	13	50*	Y10	90bs	125lb	Sindarin fighter. Bow of Quickness (3 shots/2 rds). Shield of Concealment +25 hiding. Boots of Silence. SD72, Co91, Ag100, Me92, Re95, St98, Qu99, Pr81, In94, Em92

Notes: *Weapon and shield codes are same as those found with Table 8.21 above. An * indicates enhanced armor or clothing adds to DB (e.g. both the dwarves and elves have mithril chain). PP = power points. "+" and "x" symbols preceding magic item descriptions = additional spells of any level capable of being cast/day OR power point multiplier. For spell summaries: = preceding "/" = number of lists of given type; = following list type = level of known spells on given lists (see Section 1.323 for spell list explanation). Certain aged, gifted, or special NPCs (for instance Thranduil) may deviate from the usual rules regarding access to spell lists.*

8.3 ENCHANTED THINGS

8.31 POISONS AND ROTTEN THINGS

NAME	AFFLICTION	SOURCE	FORM	APPEARANCE	EFFECT	LEVEL	FREQUENCY
Hith-i-Girith	Depressant	Leaves	Mist	Mild Vapor	Immediate sleep	4	Moderate
Yavin Girith	Poison	Fruit	Juice	Golden/clear	Deep sleep; 1-100 hits	10	Rare
Angurth	Disease	Flea blood	Bacteria	Invisible	Slow, painful death	2	Diminishing
Ondohithui	Poison	Stone lichen	Paste	Blue/grey	Fatal dehydration	9	Very rare
Asgurash	Poison	Snake venom	Paste	Brown/red	Upper body paralysis	3	Moderate
Nimnaur	Solvent	Spider fluid	Juice	Milky white	Slow liquification	2	Moderate
Brithagurth	Poison	Fish venom	Juice	Black	Hardening of tendons	5	Rare
Lhugruth	Poison	Dragon blood	Juice	Grey/black	Rapidly dissolves area contacted	6	Extr. rare
Ondokamba	Poison	Bat venom	Juice	Green	Turns (1-4) hands and/or feet to stone	7	Very rare
Ruth-i-Iaur	Poison	Cave drake saliva	Fluid	Brown	Rapid erosion of nervous system	5	Extr. rare

8.32 SPECIAL HERBS

Climate Codes: (1) arid = a; (2) semi-arid = s; (3) hot and humid = = h; (4) mild temperate = m; (5) cool temperate = t; (6) cold = c; (7) severe cold (frigid) = f; (8) everlasting cold = e

Locale Codes: Glacier/snowfield = G; Alpine = A9 Mountain = M; Heath/scrub = H; Coniferous forest = C; Deciduous/mixed forest = D; Jungle/rain forest = J; Short grass = S; Tall grass = T; Breaks/wadis = B; Waste = W; Desert = D; Freshwater coasts & banks = F; Ocean/saltwater shores = O; Volcanic = V; Underground (caverns etc.) = U

Frequency: Based on a scale of 1-100. These numbers are indicative of availability in wild. Price shows purchase availability in towns and other "shopping areas."

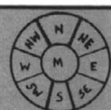
Compass Code: Last code in sequence shows area of Middle-earth where herb is indigenous, or most common. "U" equals universal. "M" indicates mid-Endor.

Preparation Codes: dr = drink; cr = crush; bu = burn; ch = chew; in = inhale; im = immerse.

NAME	CODES	FORM	PREP	COST	EFFECT
Sense Enhancement					
Agaath	eG90U	berry	eat	5gp	Breathe with low oxygen (25% +) 12 hrs. Once per 2 days.
Ankii	sB10W	berry	eat	100gp	Restores as good sleep. Use in given week results in: once = loss 1 pt Co; twice = loss 5 pts; thrice = 25 pt loss (temp)
Atigax	fH20NW	root	boil/dr	40gp	Protects eyes in intense light or glare. Allows sight despite sudden or blinding light. 9 hrs
Breldiar	mV25U	flower	eat	25gp	Subtracts 30 from maneuver and melee. Adds 50 to spells and missile attacks. Euphoria. 1 hr
Bright Blue Eyes	mS5W	flower	boil/dr	15gp	Enhanced vision (x3 plus mild infravision) for 3 hrs. 1x/day.
Elben's Basket	tS10NW	root	boil/dr	10gp	Heart stimulant. Doubles speed for 1 rd once per hour.
Grapeleaf Magnolia	mD10NW	nectar	drink	7gp	Intoxication, dreams, and 1 days nutrition.
Joef	tB6M	powder	inhale	35gp	Allows mental summons of one known sentient friend (100'x level of user).
Kathkusa	fW20N	leaf	chew	50gp	2x strength (2-5 rds).
Klagul	sS17U	bud	boil/chew	27gp	Infravision (6 hrs).
Splayfoot Goodwort	mF39W	seeds	diss/dr	23gp	For "good," instills confidence and singleness of purpose (+25) for 1 to 4 hrs.
Zulsendura	aU10U	mushroom	eat	70gp	Haste (3 rds).
Zur	cU30M	fungus	brew/dr	12gp	Enhances smell and hearing (x3 for 1 hr).
Concussion Relief					
Arlan	tT82NW	leaf	poultice	13sp	Heals 4-9. Wild heals 1-6.
Cusamar	cH16N	flower	bu/in	30gp	Heals 15-60 (10 + 5x D10).
Darsurion	cM55U	leaf	rub	35bp	Heals 1-6.
Draaf	sO40W	leaf	eat	7sp	Heals 1-10.
Gariig	aD35U	cactus	sap/dr	55gp	Heals 30.
Gefnul	eV90N	lichen	eat	90gp	Heals 100.
Grarig	hV75U	leaf	eat	60gp	Heals 30.
Mirenna	cM85U	berry	eat	10gp	Heals 10. Instant effect.
Rewk	tD65U	nodule	cr/br/ch	7gp	Heals 2-20.
Thurl	tD80U	clove	br/dr	2sp	Heals 1-4.
Winclamit	cC7N	fruit	boil/eat	100gp	Heals 3-300.
Yavethalion	mO15W	fruit	eat	45gp	Heals 5-50.
Antidotes & Disease Cures					
Eldanna	cO63N	leaf	brew/dr	99gp	Antidote for Silmaana. Cures Orn.
Elendil's Basket	fH77N	root	boil/dr	8gp	Purifies water. Slows effect of poison 10x. Lasts 12 hrs. One dose per day allowed.
Menelar	cC43N	cone	cr/br/dr	65gp	Cures infections. Antidote for Sharduvaak.
Mook	tC28N	berry	eat	30gp	Antidote for Jegga.
Ul-Naza	eW10N	leaf	chew	430gp	Antidote for any poison if taken within 1 day. Neutralizes all poisons below 50th level.
Shen	tF15U	leaf	dry/eat	27gp	Antidote for Acaana.
Stat Modifiers					
Lestagii	aD1M	crystal	chew	520gp	Restores any stat losses other than those due to age. Affects only one stat.
Merrig	sS8M	thorn	br/dr	90gp	Daily use increases Pr by 5. Effect occurs after 10 days use and addiction results after 2 weeks. Interruption of use will not reverse addictive resistance, but means loss of benefit. Withdrawal means loss of 10 from Co, 15 from Re and Me.
Specific Repairs					
Aloe	tH5U	leaf	salve	5bp	Doubles healing rate for burns and minor cuts. Heals 5 hits if they result from burns.
Anserke	hO10S	root	paste	75gp	Stops bleeding by clotting and sealing wound. Takes 3 rds to take effect. Patient cannot move (appreciably) without wound reopening.

Arfandas	cF15N	stem	poultice	2sp	Doubles rate of healing for fractures.
Arkasu	mT20M	mix	salve	12gp	Heals 2-12 hits. Doubles rate of healing for major wounds.
Arlan's Slipper	cM70U	root	boil/inh	1bp	Decongestant. Adds 20 to resistance vs common cold. Speeds recovery from respiratory illness by 5x.
Arnuminas	mS80N	leaf	poultice	6bp	Doubles rate of healing for sprains, torn ligaments and cartilage damage.
Arpsusar	tF15U	stalk	boil/eat	30gp	Mends muscle damage.
Arunya	mS45U	root	br/dr	2bp	Causes sleep and quick unconsciousness. One hour's sleep equals 4. Addictive if used more than 2 consecutive days.
Athelas	tC5N	leaf	boil/inh	300gp	Capable of curing anything while patient still alive, but healing only as effective as the healer. Full effect only in hands of an "ordained" king. Will not keep or give life.
Attanar	tF10U	moss	poultice	8gp	Cures fever.
Belramba	sC8M	lichen	boil/dr	60gp	Nerve repairs.
Brorkwilb	mV40U	flower	eat	9gp	Euphoric. Allows for shared dreams with family member who lies within range (100 miles x level of user). Very addictive.
Bursthelas	tS3M	stalk	br/dr	110gp	Shatter repairs.
Culkas	aD30M	leaf	wipe	35gp	Heals 10sq' of burns (any).
Dagmather	sS12U	spine	br/dr	28gp	Heals cartilage damage.
Degiik	hO15U	leaf	cr/ch	100gp	Lifekeeping (1 day).
Delrean	cC65U	bark	salve	3sp	Repels any insect. Smells foul (noticeably so).
Ebur	mO12W	flower	st/ch	22gp	Repairs sprains.
Edram	cF3N	moss	warm/eat	31gp	Mends bone.
Febfendu	cF10W	root	boil/eat	90gp	Restores hearing.
Felmather	mO9U	leaf	cr/bu/in	105gp	Mental summons of one "friend" (beasts or folk). Range 300'x user's level. Coma relief.
Gylvir	mO11U	algae	dry/eat	45gp	Allows one to breathe under water (only) for 4 hrs.
Harfy	sS8U	resin	poultice	175gp	Immediately stops any form of bleeding.
Hoak-foer	sS60M	flower	eat	67gp	Hallucinogin. Cures mind loss and mental diseases, but prevents movement (altogether) for 1-10 weeks.
Jojojopo	fM25U	leaf	dry rub	9sp	Cures frostbite. Heals 2-20 hits resulting from cold.
Kelventari	tT30U	berry	rub	19gp	Heals 1st and 2d degree burns, 1-10 hits resulting from heat.
Latha	cF50N	stem	cr/br/dr	9sp	Adds 10 to disease resistance, cures common cold. Heals 1-2 hits.
Laurelin	mO1W	leaf	chew	999gp	Lifegiving for Elves, if given within 28 days of death.
Megillos	cM30U	leaf	eat	12sp	Increases visual perception 2x for 10 minutes.
Nelisse	sV25U	leaf	br/dr	9sp	Euphoria (-50) for 1 hr. Yields 1 day's nutrition.
Nur-oiolosse	fF2U	clove	chew	200gp	Lifegiving (1 day). Kills one day later unless Sorul nut is ingested.
Oiolossë	fF1U	clove	chew	600gp	Lifegiving for Elves, if given (Ololossë) within 7 days of death.
Olvar	fO1N	flower	chew	200gp	Lifekeeping (2-20 days).
Pathur	aH43M	nodule	cr/br/dr	35gp	Lifekeeping (1 hour).
Siran	sS8M	clove	eat	80gp	Restoration of 1 organ or area. Side effect: skin disease (Pr 10% normal) and 6 hits per rd when skin exposed to full sun.
Siriena	sS9U	grass	br/im	70gp	Preservation of any organic material.
Suranie	tF45U	berry	cr/in	2gp	Stun relief (1 rd).
Sweet Galenas	mH50NW	leaf	bu/in	5sp	Relaxes (-75) 1-10 rds.
Tyr-fira	fA1U	leaf	eat	1200gp	Lifegiving, if given within 56 days.
Ukur	fH50N	nut	eat	3gp	One day's nutrition.
Yaran	tS60W	pollen	inhale	9sp	Acute smell and taste (1 hr).

TO COMPUTE: Use following two steps.



(1) Find compass area.
 (a) Mid-Endor area is always 1 away from adjacent regions.
 (b) Universal herbs are uniformly distributed.
 (c) Remaining regions are based on compass points (N,NE,E,SE,S,SW,W,NW). Cost is based on main home, but any region containing compass point (e.g. E is in NE,SE, and E) uses base price. Regions 1 step away use 2x cost; areas 2 steps away use 4x cost.

(2) Then use the cost multipliers found at 8.33 above;

(3) When selling an herb to a merchant or interested (and wealthy) individual look to two more factors.
 (a) If the herb is not "universally" available it may be hard to sell, particularly where cheap local equivalents are available;
 (b) Prices are computed as normal where there is demand. Where there is no demand, the herb will bring 50% of the price of the cheapest equivalent locally in demand and available. All price fractions here should be rounded down;
 (c) Unless otherwise stated (do to culture, locale, circumstance, etc.), PC's deduct 50% of the price when selling the herb.

(4) Herb weights should be calculated at ½ ounce per dose. This might vary in certain cases within the GM's discretion.

FINDING AN HERB IN THE WILD:

A) This formula allows the GM to determine the number of doses a group could find after a 10 hour search in previously unexplored territory (not exploited in last 6 months) which is a suitable locale for the herb sought.

B) A united group gets one roll for an organized search. Roll randomly to see how many doses a given individual finds.

C) A group may separate into smaller units which make separate rolls. The individuals or parties must cover entirely separate areas, usually out of earshot, and not contact each other during the period in question.

D) Formula:
#doses = found [(1-100 on open-ended D100) + modifiers + frequency # - 100] divided by 5 **OR** the frequency #, **whichever is lower.**

E) Modifiers:

Searching in area searched in last 6 months —	-50
Searching in compass code zone adjacent to home of herb —	-50
Each Animist in group —	+30
Each Ranger in group —	+20
Each additional searcher —	+2
Each day spent unsuccessfully searching —	+5

NOTE: *When employed too frequently most herbs will create dependence (addiction). The GM should decide what the resulting side effect(s) should be.*

8.33 ITEMS OF NOTE

Most Potent

SARN FEANAUR: (S."Fire-spirit Stone") Mid-S.A. Haudh-en-Aiganaur. Clear sphere; 6" diameter. Holder of orb can capture the soul of target within 100'; attack level = 20 + user's lvl; user can then control soul-less body within 300' or employ a 100' flame bolt of same level (as soul) which burns away soul and kills hollow body of target. If orb is separated from user's physical person, target's soul returns to body. Usable once/day. Holds one soul. Dark-elf construct. Weighs 2 lbs.

ARKENSTONE: (Passim) Post T.A. 1999 Erebor. Priceless jewel; clear with a inner glow of white flame. Dwarven symbol of lordship over "Kingdom Under the Mountain." Bestows holder with strength of body and purpose; allows +20 for OB, DB, RR, and maneuvers.

MOTHRAS: (S. "Dusk Horn") Late S.A. Gondmaeglom. Dragon horn; 18" curved instrument with 1 oz. mithril mouthpiece. When blown, user can summon 1-20 beasts of any one type desired, their individual lvls not to exceed user's. Creatures arrive in rds = number summoned and will stay with user until battle over or 30 minutes pass, whichever is longer, but user must concentrate to direct them. 3 lb mannish tool created by "Middle Men," possibly Northman ancestors.

Potent

MIRAMARTH: (S. "Doom Jewel") Late F.A. Caras Amarth. ½" black stone encased in clear blue jewel 2" in diameter. When "at rest" and exposed it creates a 30' x 30' x 30' area of impenetrable darkness. When covered, there is no effect. When held and exposed, darkness ensues, but the wielder can see as if the jewel was not present. Effect is immediate and constant, and the enchantment is 30th level. Possibly a legacy of Morgoth. Weighs 2 lbs.

SULTHOL: (S. "Wind Helm") Mid S.A. Uthrael Beoac, now in Itangast's hoard. Blue leather, unmasked helm, inlaid with silver and reinforced with steel trimming. Allows wearer to "wind-run," or move up to 10 mph as much as 100 feet above the ground on a level plane. Vertical movement is via levitation at 5 mph. Wearer can use this power but once a day, and for no more than 10 minutes. Created by Edain-related lords who once occupied the region northwest of Dale. Weighs 2 lbs.

SARN-I-HIN: (S: "Stone of Children") Late S.A. Emyn-nu-Fuin, now in the ruins of Barad Fuin (S. "Gloom Tower," as in fortress). One pound grey-green stone which will glow upon the command "galgalen" (S. "shine green"). This brightness can be controlled, and can vary from a dim aura to a brilliant, non-blinding shimmering. The principal power of the stone is its ability to delve into the mind. When directed at a target within 10', it can read his/her thoughts for up to 3 minutes. Alternatively, the stone can be used to reduce a target to a "childlike" state for 1-10 rds. Attacks at 10th level and only one brightening and one attack can be used in any 24 hour period. Wood-elf device.

Modest

MITHRAM: (S. "Grey Wall") Early T.A. Amon Thranduil, now located in ruin where the Men-i-Naugrim crosses the Celduin (old Iach Celduin). This is a 10' x 10' grey cloth spun of spider-silk and made by Wood-elves. It is kept folded and rolled in a 5' sheath made of carved chestnut. The sheath weighs 2 lbs, and the cloth 5 lbs; but when stored together, they weigh but 3 lbs. Bearer of sheath can control unfolded cloth to move at up to 5 mph, and to distances as far as 200 feet away. The cloth cannot move on its own while supporting more than 1 pound of "dead weight."

CU-I-THANG: (S. "Bow of Oppression") Mid S.A. Easterling, now in the bandit lair at Dyn Odoric (Rh. "Odoric's Hill"). Made of deep reddish wood, white bone, and black sinew; inlaid and trimmed in golden steel. It is a +25 composite bow, but the user will always fire at the nearest target he/she perceives, be it friend or foe. Four and one half feet in length, it weighs two and one half pounds.

CARNE-COIMAS: (Q. "Red Life-bread") Late F.A. Eregion, now in spiders' lair in Mirkwood. Six white 1" round wafers in a white birch box inlaid with cedar and mithril. Worth 3 mp , it weighs ½ pound. Allows ingestor to cast 3rd level word "Serkemando" (Q. "Blood Prison") at one target within 10 feet, once per day. Failure to resist results in target's entire circulatory system instantly hardening into a thick paste; target dies in 1-2 rounds.

8.4 ECONOMIC TABLES

8.41 TRADE IN NORTHERN RHOVANION

Trade in Rhovanion is largely based on barter. Nonetheless, a silver standard of sorts exists and operates in more settled locales, particularly Dale and Esgaroth. The Wood-elves of Thranduil's Kingdom respect currency and even mint a little of their own on commemorative occasions, but they still prefer to deal in refined goods and precious substances. The chart below is a summary of the chief exports, imports, and monetary units of the principal trade centers of the region.

The **mietan** (Rh. "Measure"), Esgaroth's silver piece, sets the standard for evaluating the worth of coins in Rhovanion. Consistent purety and widespread circulation account for its tremendous respect. For purposes of this chart, 1 sp = 1 mietan.

AREA	EXPORTS	IMPORTS	CURRENCY
Esgaroth*	Cloth, barrels, fish, grains, candles, and a wide variety of finished goods. Area's principal market-place.	Raw and finished goods of all kinds.	Mietan = 1 sp, Mael = ½ cp
Dale*	Grains, cut stone, finished metal-work, weaponry, salt, jewelry, beer, dairy goods, glass, wool.	Meat, wine, raw metals, non-wool cloth, paper, spices, candles. (6 ip = 1 ap).	Feladoel = ½ sp, Moel = 1 cp, Airen = 1 ip
Wood-elves*	Wood-craft, raw wood, fish, salted foods, long bows, fine cloth (e.g. spidersilk), jewelry, herbs, fruit.	Wine, metals, wool, peculiar goods. Celeban = 5 sp.	Mostly barter. Rare coin
Wood-men	Wood-craft, hides, beeswax, herbs, furs, salted meat.	Beer, wine, cloth, weapons, various finished goods.	None.
Beijabar	Honey, beeswax, furs, hides, oak-craft, mead.	Raw metal, cloth, weapons.	None.
Dwarves*	Raw metals, metal-work, gems, stone-work, weapons.	Mead, beer, heavy wines, salted meat, cloth, oils.	Mazuldar = 1 gp, Ziguldar = 5 sp, Ghaladar = 1 bp, Ghuladar = ½ cp
Gramuz	Grain, horses, salted meat, linen, beer, pottery.	Wool, metal-work, weapons, salt.	None.

Note: *Based on mietan as standard sp, the exchange rate is: 1 gp = 25 sp; 1 sp = 5 bp; 1 bp = 2 cp; 1 cp = 6 ip. Variations due to time, politics, a coin's purity, and basic circumstance occur frequently. This area has considerable trade, but a highly fluctuating norm of exchange. An * indicates that coins are minted, at least occasionally.*

8.43 MAINTENANCE COSTS (By Area)

Need	Esgaroth	Dale	Gramuz	Dwarves	Wood-elves	Beijabar	Wood-men
Light Meal	½ cp	½ cp	B2 ip	1 cp*	B1 cp	n/a	B2 cp
Normal Meal	1 cp	1 cp	B½ cp	2 cp*	B2 cp	free*	B3 cp
Heavy Meal	1 ½ cp	2 cp	B1 cp	4 cp*	B3 cp	free*	B5 cp
Week's Rations	5 cp	6 cp	B4 cp	1 sp*	B8 cp	free*	B15 cp
Week's Preserved Rations	1 sp	15 cp	B7 cp	2 sp*	B9 cp	free*	B2 sp
Poor Lodging	½ cp	½ cp	B1 ip	2 cp*	n/a	n/a	B3 cp
Average Lodging	1 cp	1 cp	B½ cp	6 cp*	B1 ½ cp	free*	B8 cp
Fine Lodging	3 cp	4 cp	B5 cp	n/a	B3 cp	free*	n/a

Note: *Costs preceded by a "B" indicate that barter is the norm. Currency may be used in certain cases. An * means that that there is extremely limited access to the commodity or service; friendship, kindness, or connections must normally be relied on.*

8.42 COST VARIABLES

The following guidelines can help the GM determine a commodity's price, regardless of locale.

1) Goods are cheaper in the rural areas of origin or in towns;
2) Basic services are cheaper in rural areas;
3) Exotic or refined services, where available, are cheaper in towns;
4) Enchanted items are cheaper and more prevalent in towns or among the Wood-elves and dwarves;
5) Seasonality plays a major part in some pricing. For example, harvest time is in the fall and grain is most expensive during the period between late winter and mid-summer. Fish and meats are rare and expensive during the mid to late winter; see section 3.0 for weather chart;
6) Suggested cost multipliers might be:
   - Native commodity— ½x
   - Commonly available or usual import— 1x
   - Periodic import or off season— 2x
   - Rare commodity— 3x
   - Banned commodity— 5x
7) Steady trade occurs along Rhovanion's main thoroughfares, particularly the rivers and the early-to-mid Third Age Men-i-Naugrim. Prices are often lower, and availability of goods and services higher, among folk living by these routes.

8.5 CAMPAIGN AND ADVENTURE SUGGESTIONS

This section is intended to give the GM suggestions for setting up scenarios or an extended campaign. Examples of player character backgrounds and sites for adventure are provided.

8.51 SUGGESTED SETTINGS

When choosing locations to begin adventures, it is important to note one's preference for the period when the action transpires. This module focuses heavily on the mid-Third Age of Middle-earth, but has been designed to give the GM temporal flexibility. Some layouts, for instance the Elvenking's Halls and Sarn Goriwing, are accurate representations of places which do not fundamentally change during the last two thousand years of the Third Age. Other sites may be in ruin by F.A. 1. Still others are shown in more than one manifestation. Some are appropriate for any game, while others are best-suited to a particular time. The following is a place-by-place summary of some prominent sites, with notes regarding time conversions.

Erebor: The Lonely Mountain undergoes a profound transformation after Thráin I's arrival in T.A. 1999. Before that time it is still a fine place for adventure, but the sole occupants are beasts and the few men from Dale who seek the mineral riches locked in the natural cavern complex. Afterwards, the Dwarves construct finely-made chambers and occupy the mountain until the arrival of Smaug the Golden in T.A. 2770. Following a crisp attack on the Dwarven defenders, the dragon sets up residence, and rules the central complex until his death in T.A. 2941. This 171 year period is marked by the desolation of the surrounding countryside. After Smaug's fall, Dwarves reoccupy the "Kingdom Under the Mountain."

Adventures set prior to T.A. 1999 will allow the adventurers to enter the site without being (1) burned to a crisp, or (2) beset by Dwarf-lords. Unless the group is friendly with the Naugrim, or awesome in strength, this will be the ideal gaming period for scenarios involving Erebor. At other times it either too formidable or a settlement of short, stocky, protective, and well-armed miners.

Note that Dáin II ("Ironfoot") is King Under the Mountain from T.A. 2941 until 3019. Another member of Thorin (II) Oakenshield's party, Glóin son of Gróin, is one of the wealthiest and most powerful Dwarf-lords during this era, and together with his son Gimli (b. T.A. 2879), represented the Kingdom at Elrond's Council in T.A. 3018. All three were of the remnant of Durin's Folk who arrived from the Iron Hills after Smaug's demise.

Any group interested in riches or perplexed by the mysteries of the Darkness of Old, will likely be drawn to the Lonely Mountain. Before the coming of the Dwarves, however, few know of more than rumors. Those in Dale, however, might learn of the mountain's great wealth by running into Beawyn or observing the peculiar night-time activity high on the western cliffs.

Iron Hills: Until T.A. 2590, the small group of Balli's Folk dominates the highlands of the Emyn Engrin. In that year, a number of Dwarves arrive from the Ered Mithrin. The latter group, members of Durin's Folk, seek a haven from the increasingly-active dragons. This band is part of the same tribe which occupies Erebor from T.A. 1999 through 2770. From this point on, the Dwarves of the line of Durin the Deathless are predominate. Like their brethren, however, they are beset with trouble from the Sagath and related mannish groups. These men maintain a small population in the northern sections of the Iron Hills from about T.A. 1400 until the end of the Third Age.

Adventurers might be led to the Iron Hills as a result of rumors of the evil Cult of the Long Night. A number of common folk, particularly among the Gramuz, know of this Darkness, and some adhere to it. Alternatively, the lure of booty from Rhûnnish supply trains might attract attention. The passes of the Emyn Engrin provide good ambush points, and some may find the Sagath less dangerous than the orcs of the Grey Mountains. In addition, the Iron Hills are further removed from the scourge of dragons.

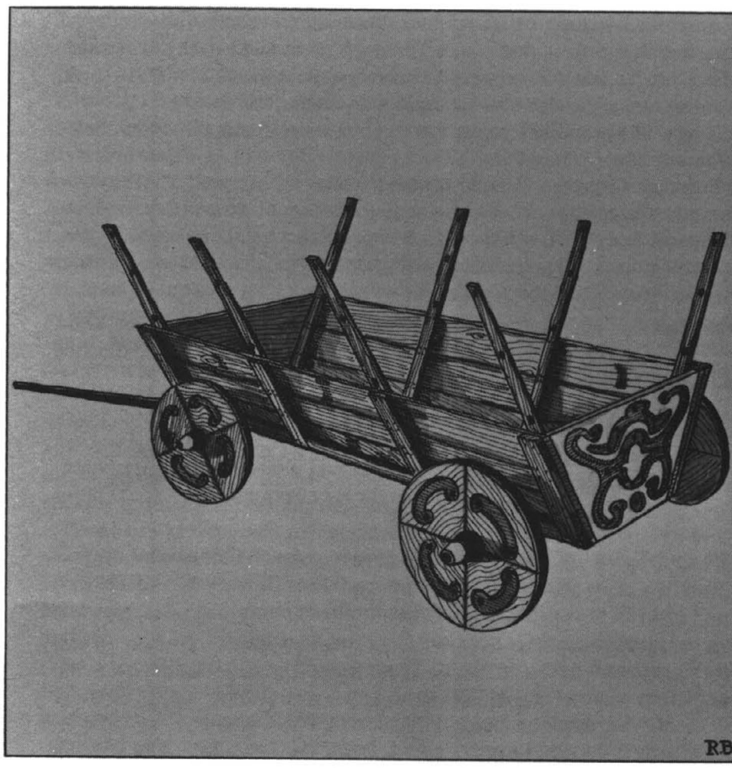
Adventuring in this region is highly exciting, regardless of the period.

Ered Mithrin: The Grey Mountains are the domain of foul beasts and orcs until about T.A. 2000. From T.A. 2000 to 2200 a large portion of Durin's Folk settle the area and subdue the orcs of the southern foothills. By T.A. 2590, however, the Dwarves are pressured to depart after awakening the long-dormant wrath of the dragons. A combination of stirrings sparked by Dwarven incursions and "new arrivals" of cold drakes from the Far North, lead to the exodus; Grór takes some of the Dwarves to the Iron Hills, while King Thrór leads the rest to join their brethren in Erebor. After T.A. 2600 the area is much as it was before T.A. 2000.

Ancient mannish holy places and rich mines are strewn throughout the Ered Mithrin, and anyone interested in great wealth might be tempted to venture into the region. Orc tribes are small and the dragons somewhat dormant, so the dangers are avoidable. Winters are brutally cold, meaning that adventures are best sought during the active months— when frequent mannish supply trains along the Men Rhûnen heighten the level of excitement.

The Northmen and Beijabar who live south of the range are aware of the many legends associated with the Grey Mountains. Tales of the Uthrael Boeac and Gondmaeglom are many, and adventurers will encounter the temptation frequently.

Due to the sheer size of the area, and its continual wildness, the Ered Mithrin provide ideal settings throughout the Third Age. Note that, aside from a brief period of Dwarven settlement, the sites here are (1) natural caverns and mines, (2) orc holds, (3) abodes of beasts, or (4) ruins of proto-Northman structures.



Dale and Esgaroth: Both towns are traditional locations for Northman settlements, and are continually changing and rebuilding. During the Third Age Dale is continuously occupied, except during the period from 2770 through 2941, but sees its largest growth after the settling of Erebor by Dwarves in 1999. Dale is in ruins during the 171 years of Smaug's reign under the mountain. Adventurers in pre-1999 Dale are in a ruder, more frontier-flavored environment. Those delving into the ruins following Smaug's man-roast will find little but charcoal, twisted metal, and blackened stone. After T.A. 2941 the settlement returns to glory. It survives the War of the Ring (T.A. 3018-19), despite occupation by Sauron's Easterlings.

Esgaroth is settled later than either Dale or Londaroth, and grows to prominence after the latter's decline. By T.A. 1640 Lake Town is the primary market place, and is an adventurer's best base of operations. It is well-protected and relatively neutral. Like Dale, and the rest of lowland Rhovanion, however, it is occupied by Wainriders from T.A. 1856 until the Northman Revolt of 1899. Burned by Smaug in T.A. 2770, it is rebuilt with the aid of the refugees from Dale. The later incarnation is rectangular and has but one central harbor. Nonetheless, it is still Rhovanion's main town.

Open Country: Adventures in this territory are always exciting, but the post-Plague years (T.A. 1637-50) and the Years of Occupation (T.A. 1856-99) provide the most ideal settings. During the former time outlaws and highly protective refugees ravage the area, forcing their already battered brothers into a position of constant vigil. Under the Wainrider rule, the Gramuz and their neighbors the Éothraim produce a number of resistance groups which return to the abandoned holds of the brigands.

Aside from these two eras, and a brief onslaught of Darkness from the South and East (T.A. 3018-19), the open country is relatively peaceful, and provides a refuge from excitement.

Mirkwood: Following T.A. 1000, Greenwood the Great sees an ever-lengthening Shadow pour forth from the South. By T.A. 1640 it has been renamed Mirkwood, and the safe havens from Darkness have dwindled; Thranduil's Kingdom and the holds of the Wood-men are the primary places of safety. The Men-i-Naugrim, the forest's principal road, falls into disuse during the middle of the age. What was once revered as the "Great East Road" becomes largely overgrown, and the growing swamps and marshes near the Celduin force many to abandon the route altogether. As of T.A. 1640 it is a shadowy path, often beset with orc or brigand attacks. Only large, well-armed groups tred its course with any semblance of safety. This provides an ideal setting for adventures, for prior to T.A. 1000 the area is relatively placid; and after T.A. 2000 the force of Darkness shuts out all light along the route.

The Mountains of Mirkwood and the areas of the forest outside the domain of the Wood-elves also follow this pattern. After 1856, and the Wainrider's conquest of Rhovanion, Mirkwood becomes too dangerous for many, less-potent parties of adventurers. Orcs and Lhachglin's strange forest beasts are often overwhelmingly dominant. Thranduil's folk, however, are always able to maintain their niche.

Note that Thranduil's young son Legolas takes command of an Uialcu sometime after T.A. 2650.

Elven adventurers will likely wish to use Amon Thranduil, Celebannon, or some other Wood-elf settlement as their base or home. Other adventurers will find the Elves less open. Any period is a good one in this region, and adventurers will see a similar setting throughout the latter two-thirds of the Third Age. Only the atmosphere will change.

Nan Anduin: The Anduin Valley changes significantly during the Third Age. Due to the complex movements a brief timeline follows, providing a glimpse of some major migrations:

14th cent. T.A. — The last Hobbit tribe to cross the Misty Mountains, the Stoors, depart from the Anduin Valley. The Harfoots and Fallohides had already headed westward. Elves and men of the area were most close to the latter group.

15th cent.T.A. — Many of the Stoors re-cross the mountains and resettle on the western side of the river by the Gladden Fields (see ***Southern Mirkwood***).

T.A. 1857-99 — The Éothraim and other refugee Northman groups leave the open country of Rhovanion and settle along the Anduin between the Iach Iaur (S. "Old Ford") and the Gladden Fields.

T.A. 1977 — The Éothraim, now called the Éothéod, are led northward by Frumgar. They settle near the sources of the Anduin, northwest of Mirkwood and south of the Ered Mithrin. Their new land is also called the Éothéod.

T.A. 2510 — The Éothéod, now called by many the Eorlings or Eorlingas, migrate south and settle in what is later Rohan.

As noted in Section 1.0, this area will be covered thoroughly in future modules. The Nan Anduin of T.A. 1640 is relatively wild and underpopulated, and provides an ideal locale for encountering Wood-men, Beijabar, and beasts. Adventurers will be attracted here by (1) tales of ancient ruins (e.g. the ancient Northman site by the Iach Iaur), (2) rumors of rich holy sites (e.g. the Carrock), or (3) opportunities for trade or political intrigue among the Wood-men or Beijabar. Some might also seek the secret of the "Shape-changers," or wish to raid Angmar's frontiers. Of course, there are always opportunities to strike Rhûnnish wagon trains.

8.52 SUGGESTED PC BACKGROUNDS

Since player characters, like the GM, will generally give as much as they receive, is usually wise to give them a past they can relate to and a foundation with which to build. The following suggested PC backgrounds will enable a GM to start characters with less thought than is normally required.

- Camthalion's young son or daughter, a Silvan Elf who longs for his/her sister Namirë.
- A Wood-elf, child of Ohtar of Celebannon. He/she seeks the lost jewel Sarn Amarth (see 8.3), and has a clue that it may be among the ancient ruins of the mannish city of Caras Amarth (S. "Moated Fortress of Doom"). The jewel is probably evil and may be an aid to the power in Dol Guldur.
- A Wood-elf, younger brother or sister of Heladil the warrior. This young Elf seeks knowledge of the nature of the Gulduin, and why it is enchanted.
- A mannish traveler, perhaps from Gondor proper, who seeks adventure along the Kingdom's old frontier. He is staying in the Vodagarazun and has (1) learned of the rich booty to be found in the Ered Mithrin, and (2) become infatuated with one of Odavacer's daughters.
- A young, adventurous resident of Londaroth by Lindal whose family was abused by the miller Viloric. (No proof exists, but Viloric may have murdered the PC's sister in an act of passion.) Strange encounters between Viloric and some shady folk from Esgaroth have given rise to suspicion, and rumors persist concerning the cruel Woedwyn's mysterious trips to the east.
- A child of a Gramuz family which was murdered by the mounted raiders of Dieraglir. The entire village (Rh. "Maedwe-dukas") was burned to the ground, but the young PC had been away with his old uncle, fishing in the Celduin.
- Young brother or sister of Jirfelien. Attacks by the Thyn's wife Sulwyn, and her overbearing Daletheod clan, have long irritated the Aldurlingas. In addition, Jirfelien herself appears in danger.
- Child of Beawyn the Seer. This PC seeks proof of Beawyn's claim of evil in the Lonely Mountain, and hopes to restore the old woman's reputation. Suspicious activities by the Daletheod have long made Beawyn believe that her credibility was a danger to some. In addition, the remains of Thealaf have never been found.
- A young Dwarf seeking knowledge of the "strange lights" he saw in a valley northwest of Barak-shathur. Tales of a foul curse which has claimed the lives of three other young Dwarves in recent years are unsettling, but will not stay the curiosity.
- Any character wishing recovery of one of the items described above in Section 8.33.

9.0 NORTHERN MIRKWOOD AT OTHER TIMES (T.A. 1 - T.A. 3021)

For the first one thousand years of the Third Age, the forest known as Greenwood the Great is a place of light and greenery, a region of hills and valleys thick with ash, beech, elms, oak and pine, a land crisscrossed by man — and Elf-made paths and alive with the chatter of animals.

9.1 EVERYDAY LIFE

Along the mighty Anduin, trade is brisk. Because the Misty Mountains stand as a vast unbroken chain, all trade with the West must travel down the Anduin to the Old Ford, and once there, hike over the Mountains at the High Pass, near Goblin-town, before crossing the Ford of Bruinen to reach Eriador or to Eregion to the south. Forts are built along the river's banks,

for protection from raiders, both the ever-present, always-blood thirsty bands of orcs wandering through the region and from lawless gangs of outcast Northmen too lazy to work for a living. Much further south, the River winds past Lórien, where the East-elves are settled; their contact with the Wood-elves of the forest depends upon the Anduin too, to act as a conduit for moving vast amounts of goods easily north to south.

9.11 WOOD-ELF LIFE

In Thranduil's Caverns on the Forest River, the Wood-elves tend their apple orchards, weave, spin long tales and sing songs about daily happenings or age-old myths. They pause to hunt in the woods with bows and spears and feast and keep an eye on the men nearby. The Wood-elves visit and trade tales and goods with their cousins south and west at Lórien, across the Anduin, and enjoy exploring for its own sake. Trade southeast with the men of the Dorwinion is common too, for Elves are fond of good wine and wouldn't think of throwing a party without rivers of the stuff. Unfortunately, the forest has no vineyards and even the Elves' enchantments, which can turn a gurgling mountain stream into a formidable barrier, cannot grow grapes in Greenwood.

Maintaining the Forest River's banks has gotten to be a sore spot with Thranduil's Folk because of the Gramuz (Rh. "Grasslanders"; Plains-men), a Northman group clustered on the Rhovanion plains just east of the forest eaves. The Grasslanders contend that the Elves, with their mighty magic, ought simply to cast a spell and shape the river banks just as they want them. It is tedious work to the entrepreneurial Plains-men, who live near the River and also trade with the men of the Dorwinion, and it brings them no profit.

9.12 GRAMUZ LIFE

These Gramuz build thatch-roofed cabins of wood near Long Lake and seek to survive and prosper acting as agents of trade, their wives and children augmenting the family welfare by farming and fishing. They keep animals, live by the seasons and band together for protection from raiding orcs or trolls, bands of Northmen-bandits or more rarely, Dorwinion-warriors pushing for more land. Tall, broad and bearded, the Gramuz represent the settling spirit of the Fourth Age, when the battle against enslaving Evil is won and men work their wills, pushing back the Elves, Dwarves and Hobbits as they seize control of Middle-earth's dominions. Plains-men speak their own Rhovanion dialect but like good businessmen anywhere, can converse with men from the East or West.

Living near Long Lake and the River Running, the "Grasslanders" have learned river navigation and float the waters on rafts heavy with hides from the north; the waterfalls (*Lindal*) south of Long Lake prevent easy travel north and south on the River Running and force men to portage at least some of the journey up or down river, making a trading settlement near the site a logical idea and no doubt raising the toll charged for the trip.

9.13 WOOD-MAN LIFE

Less mercantile and more xenophobic are two distinct groups of Northmen living west of Thranduil's Folk and the Gramuz of the Rhovanion, one in the heart of the forest, the other along the upper vales of the Anduin. The first, the ***Wood-men***, are for the most part hunters and trappers who have banded together to live a quasi-nomadic life, always in search of food and warmth. (However, one branch of the Wood-men has settled just east of the Old Ford, where the Old Forest Road meets the Anduin, to set up stakes and act as a staging area for traffic crossing the River.) Dressed in skins and furs, living in arched, rectangular structures of hide stretched over poles, these hunters and their families roam and forage a wide area, looking for signs of deer herds and other big game. While the men are off searching for game for weeks at a time, women and children gather berries, honey and wild fruits like May-apples; women also gather wood for fire and set up as well as take down the family home, packing all their belongings in the process.

Women have more to do. When a felled beast is dragged back to camp, women prepare it for eating and tan the hide. The meat is cut into strips and smoked or dried, for it must last a long time, often without the refrigeration of a mountain stream. Women also instruct the children in the ways of the forest and tend to the clothing.

In the winter the Wood-men set traps, net fish and gaff beavers, whose fur is highly valued. When the men are successful in their hunting and drag home sleds straining under the weight of game, the band — often an extended family — celebrates, feasts and pulls up stakes to head for new territory. Rotating hunting grounds as they do, the Wood-men reduce the danger of depleting an area's game and satisfy the wanderlust that beats in their blood.

These forest-lovers know every inch of the Elven paths and man-made trails cutting across and up-and-down the northern forest; if a blade of grass has been bent by a buck, they recognize it. While essentially standoffish and very independent, the Wood-men do come together once a year at the *starend* (summer solstice) in the heart of the northern forest. At a mass meeting-feast, the men arrange and conduct marriages and worship ritually, as did their fathers. Women and children take part in the songs and feasting but the elaborate hunting ritual and dance is an all-male affair. If we were peeking through the bushes, we would see the Wood-men as they are rarely viewed: as soulful barbarians enacting highly-ritualized and ancient 'dramas' portraying the hunt, one man acting as a ferocious Great Bear or a bold buck. Highly superstitious, Wood-men believe their annual ceremonies and rituals essential to continued good hunting and survival. Also at the annual assembly, called *"motadan"*, a kind of judicial council sits to settle disputes that would otherwise resolve themselves in bloodshed. It is probably the only time of the year most of the northern Wood-men see their relatives who have established a trading settlement in the southern forest to barter hides, furs and wood crafts for finer woolen cloth and comestibles from the East.

While having very little contact with other groups of beings, Wood-men do interact with the Wood-elves in a small way, each no doubt bearing a grudging admiration for the other's forest knowledge and respect for game and greenery (although the Elves would come nearer if the Wood-men bathed more often). Later in the Third Age some Wood-men would warn Thranduil's Folk of a heavy contingent of orcs in the area, a rarely seen gesture of cross-cultural brotherhood in the forest.

9.14 BEIJABAR LIFE

Related to the Wood-men in heritage, appearance and reverence for the wilderness yet very different and distinct are the great hairy men gathered at the Carrock and along the hilly banks of the upper Anduin, the ***Beijabar*** (later, the *"Beornings"*). Living a more structured and anchored existence in enclaves gathered nearby the huge boulder called the Holy Carrock, a religious site of great significance to them, the Beijabar depend solely upon themselves and a single mythic leader, a mighty holy-man and skin-changer they believe capable of turning himself into a Great Bear at will, for survival. This skin-changer, always without family, guides them, although oddly enough the lycanthrope is something of an outcast, leading a solitary existence outside the normal realm of group hunting, fishing, husbandry and gathering activities. (Tireless travelers, the Beijabar roam the many north-south trails, some over dry stream beds which act as western Greenwood's road system.) Perhaps the skin-changer is more a living symbol of some mystical ancestor, half-man, half-bear, who once prowled the Carrock in ancient times; anyway, he is served by well-trained dogs and rams, who offer some companionship. Later in the Third Age the line of lycanthropes would produce Beorn, a hero of the great battle at the end of the Age, a fierce, huge warrior who relishes displaying his stand of impaled orc-heads and stretched wolf-hides nailed to the wall of his home. Rarely seen, the Beijabar as a group tend to be solitary, easily-angered and initially suspicious of strangers, vengeful beyond bounds and quite unpredictable, although once they've accepted you, they can be courteous and display that most-rare quality in Northmen, a sense of humor. (Their booming laughter is easily mistaken for distant thunder.)

Great bee-keepers and enthusiastic flower-lovers (aside from the Entwives, they possess the **largest** green thumbs in history), the Beijabar live in low, thatched log-cabins; most have barns or stables and sheds for tools. Most impressive in appearance, these large broad men have thick black hair and generous beards and are hirsute head to foot. (One suspects that more than a few Beijabar have been grabbed from behind by amorous Great Bears and no doubt have some hair-raising tales to spin about such ticklish encounters.) Beijabar are seldom seen without an axe, which they use to fell trees and pick their teeth, and most dress in rough but comfortable wool tunics.

Like the Wood-men, the Beijabar are in touch with every whim and stirring in the forest, but in addition they know the ways of other men and are adept at great hikes, moving through the forest with the certainty and swagger of a Great Bear himself. Living a long-lasting society with well-defined customs, the Beijabar are quite different from the nomadic Wood-men, but both share a veneration of ancestors and a ritualized spiritual nature, a notion that there is something to be worshipped and celebrated in the very surroundings that they occupy.

9.15 ÉOTHRAIM LIFE

Living on the grassy plains of the Rhovanion is the fourth distinct group of Northmen, the tall, blond, fair-skinned warriors known as the Éothraim

and later as the Éothéod and finally as the Rohirrim, the valiant Riders of Rohan. These descendants of the Edain, a confederation of Northern peoples, pass most of the year on the Rhovanion plains but ride into the highlands in the late spring and summer, where the grass is abundant and sweet. The Éothraim believe their horses (which they tend like lovers, braiding their manes as they do their own hair) are gifts of the Gods, brought to them by Béma, the huntsman of the Valar.

Middle-earth's greatest equestrians, these husky 'Strawheads' are great friends with the men of Gondor; many Éothraim settle in East Bight, the great indentation in the forest's southeastern border, where they live on the grasslands they cherish and act as a counterforce to any mass-military migration from the East, a willingness that would be tested by Wainriders later in the Age.

Related to the Gramuz, the Éothraim share a similar script and tongue, an adaptation of the Dwarvish Cirth. It must be said that while the Éothraim have little use for written history or books, they do enjoy singing and keep their traditions alive in song. In a loosely-organized yet highly-martial society, the Éothraim choose leaders who are descended from the rulers who would call themselves the Kings of the Rhovanion. Again and again petty wars erupt and divide them as minor tyrants seek control of the Plains and the mounted armies that protect it. Later in the Third Age, the Éothraim would move three times: first to the vales of the Anduin between the Old Ford and the Gladden Fields; then far into the northern reaches of the Anduin, near the Witch-King's realm in Angmar; and later south to the plains Gondor calls the Calenardhon (Rohan). There, after a fierce battle against orcs and wildmen intent upon sacking what was left of Gondor, they settled and changed their name to the Rohirrim. Carrying long spears of ash, broad swords and painted shields, and dressed in gleaming shirts of mail, the Éothraim often fought each other in their long and bloody history, family against family, tribe versus tribe. Lightning-quick with bow and arrow, they have little use for the forest and think of it as home to wild animals and wilder men; instead they search for wide-open spaces, for a big sky and a sea of grass. Their idea of heaven is an endless torth-lighted hall made for feasting and fighting, with tournaments of strength and valor and a continent of roast meat and rivers of blood-red wine or hearty mead.

To the Éothraim, only a death in battle brings them glory; they honor their dead by burying them beneath cairns of great size, toasting the dead man's valor and commending him to the Valar. Thus, the Plague hit them very hard; it is a disgrace both to die so pitifully **and** to be buried in a hole, or heaped onto a funeral pyre.

The Éothraim speak a distinct tongue which is related to that of the Gramuz and the Beijabar, but also converse freely in the Common Speech, or again a dialect of it. One suspects that all groups of Northmen understand each other better than they let on.

To expect unity from four such distinct and independent groups of men, men largely without the benefit of a common history or culture, is to expect far too much; as the Third Age begins, each is safe and secure in his own habitat and somberly oblivious to the coming storms of pestilence and invasion.

Gondor and the Kin-strife

Sauron's unrelenting presence does little to lessen the other woes befalling Mirkwood in the terrible years between the outbreak of the Kin-strife in neighboring Gondor (in 1432) and the invasion of the Wainriders from the East a little more than 400 years later. Those four centuries must have tested the mettle of every creature and being of the region; even the Elves cloaked in immortality and the stone-hard Dwarves must have wondered what outrage would follow next. The Men of Mirkwood no doubt dropped to their knees in despair and bewilderment, wondering what had become of their fair wilderland and the sunny green vales they had so recently farmed and settled.

Gondor's civil war, the Kin-strife, raged for seven years and left the Kingdom, in 1438 and ever-after, a weak-kneed sister of her former martial-self. Brought about by jealousy and a kind of racism the Kin-strife dragged on until 1447, when the half-Northman Eldacar returned from refuge in the Rhovanion to regain the throne of Gondor. But the rebels, unwilling to accept Eldacar as their ruler, sailed with the fleet of Gondor to Umbar and established their own independent Corsair state. This further weakening of the bond between men and the open hostility between Gondor and Umbar played into Sauron's unseen hands.

Eldacar, proving himself a wise and untainted King, brought many of his mother's kinsmen south from the hills and valleys of Mirkwood to repopulate the devastated Gondor. Contrary to the belief of the rebels, who had argued that mixing their blood with that of the Northmen would inevitably shorten a King's lifespan and dim his wits, Eldacar lived to be a wise 235 year old ruler who passed on his kingdom to his son Aldamir in 1490.

The Plague and the Peace Before the Storm

No sooner had the men of Mirkwood and Gondor begun to recover from the effects of the Kin-strife — the loss of life, the sundering of families, the crushing of culture — than the winter of 1635 rolled in, bitterly cold, and brought with it a foul plague from the east and south. The Great Plague of the Winter of 1635-36 cannot be linked directly to Sauron's instigation, for had he known, he would have moved much faster to conquer the region; but the Dark Lord certainly benefited by it. In Gondor the fair city of Osgiliath was nearly depopulated; the royal family was struck down — even the sacred White Tree of Minas Anor died. Gondor's careful watch over their borders with Mordor ceased; men struggled simply to survive. In Mirkwood, one of every two men suffered and died — horses and other beasts of burden perished, being like men very susceptible to the poison of the plague germ. The bitter cold of the winter that swept in upon the heels of the Plague drove men and their animals indoors, where their very nearness — in a sense, their every breath — spread the deadly pestilence that much faster. (The Plague is of three types, one spread directly from the lungs of the infected individual into the air around him.)

What effects might the Plague have had upon Mirkwood beyond the obvious one of horrid deaths on a massive scale? People flee the Plague; thus, the population becomes more mobile. Men run from the false security of society to the wilderness. Respect for authority and civilization declines; laws are disregarded, people search for scapegoats — or real answers to the mystery of the Plague. Survival of the fittest becomes the highest law. Northmen, who prize a valiant death above much else, are crestfallen, forced to pile corpse upon corpse into fiery heaps. (Perhaps the Elves might have intervened to prevent **some** of the suffering and death but that is unlikely. Though themselves immune to the disease — like the Dwarves — they most likely had little knowledge of the pestilence, how it started or how to prevent it. So both the Elves and Dwarves simply shut their doors, lighted their lamps and awaited the passing of time before resuming their wanderings through the forest.)

9.2 THE TROUBLED THIRD AGE

For other "higher" men like Isildur, King of the Dúnedain and Lord of Gondor and Arnor, the Third Age begins abysmally. Ambushed along the banks of the Anduin by an overwhelming host of murderous orcs, Isildur and his men fought valiantly but were slaughtered like sheep, only three escaping to tell the tale; their leader, sensing defeat (which is not difficult when you're standing up to your hips in the bloody corpses of your fallen comrades) jumped into the mighty River and would have escaped unseen (for he wore the Ruling Ring), but the Ring slipped from his finger and another group of lucky - but - bewildered orcs filled Isildur with arrows. The Ring sank to the muddy bottom where it lay undiscovered for 2500 years.

In a way the loss of the Ring was a stroke of good Fortune: searching for it kept Sauron distracted and at the same time limited the wielding of his power. Unfortunately, its disappearance also gave the Black Lord good reason to send agents into Northern Mirkwood and Rhovanion, agents whose idea of interrogation is closer to torture than to inquiry.

The Shadow on the Forest

Around T.A. 1050, the tower of Dol Guldur arises on a stony height in southwestern Greenwood, casting its ominous shadow across the forest. The "Hill of Sorcery" quickly becomes the most feared landmark in Middle-earth, save Sauron's salon in Mordor. Fooling even the Council of the Wise (made up of the chief Eldar and the Wizards), who believe the tower inhabited solely by a Ringwraith, Sauron encamps there, overseeing his plans for Middle-earth domination. Word spreads that a Necromancer has taken up residence there.

Sauron's nearness to Greenwood the Great has its effects. The trees of the forest begin to wither and rot and collapse upon each other like drunks; clouds gather and refuse to break — the sun becomes a memory to the creatures and folk of the forest. Flowers die, animals sicken and suffer; a foul wind blows in from the East, stunting growth, delaying planting and destroying the autumn harvest. Suddenly evil birds haunt the air, spying for Sauron. Rains come early and often. Only the Hobbits have the sense and unity to flee relatively **en masse**, crossing the Misty Mountains into Eriador around 1300, fleeing both the coming of men and the ever-lengthening shadow of Dol Guldur.

Soon Greenwood the Great becomes "Mirkwood," a loose translation of the Grey-elven *Taur-e-Ndaedelos*, or "Forest-of-Great-Fear." (Amazingly, Sauron is able to pull off his grand hoax for another 1800 years, until Gandalf the Grey enters the Tower for the second time — uninvited — and discovers the dying Dwarf King Thráin II, the key and map to Erebor, and the truth.)

A Timeline Outlining the Disruptive Effects of the Great Plague upon Northern Mirkwood (1635-1640).

1635

The Great Plague (of Gondor) spreads through Mirkwood, killing man and beast in large numbers. Trade is disrupted. Wood-elves lay low, offering no help to the suffering Northmen; the Dwarves hide and wait.

1636

Refugees of the Plague leave Mirkwood, heading west or north to the Mountains. The bitterly-cold Winter sends man and beast indoors, spreading the pestilence faster (although the cold itself destroys the Plague germ).

1637

Continued chaotic flight to avoid the Plague, which by now had killed about one-half of Mirkwood's inhabitants.

1638

The Plague subsides, but its ghastly effects continue to haunt the living. Men slowly rebuild their abandoned homes.

1639-40

To the survivors, the Plague is now a bad memory. The bodies are burned or buried, the disease at rest. Men return in numbers to the woods and resettle the plains east of the Celduin. Commerce resumes along the rivers.

Imagine the horror of the Northman's family as the man is struck down by the pestilence, as its poisons attack the vital organs of his body. The first symptoms — a weak, irregular heartbeat and a fever in the evening — give way to more serious symptoms: a severe headache, bloody sputum and finally delerium, coma and death. Tumors accompany the suffering; swellings pop up under the armpits or in the groin, some the size of an apple. The lumps spread. Small black spots suddenly appear on the arms and legs, the spots first few and large, then small and many in number. In two to five days, after dreadful suffering, the victim is dead (thus the name Angurth: "Long Death"). The lucky ones, struck down but not sufficiently infected to collapse and die, recover, but most beings overcome by the miasma perish in a horrendous fashion.

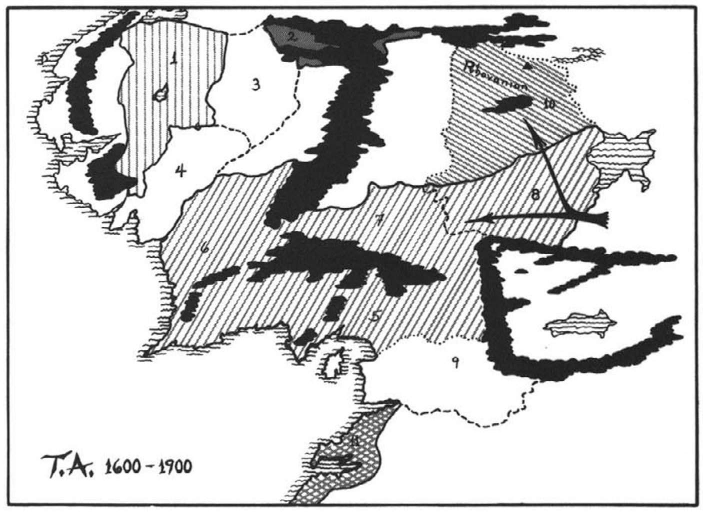
Considering the widespread effect of the Plague — it traveled northwest into Eriador and the Shire — it is remarkable that the folk and beasts of Mirkwood recovered from it as soon and as well as they did. One reason the Plague weakened was sheer luck: the frigid winter that followed the outbreak (while driving people and their livestock indoors) actually inhibited or destroyed the Plague germ, which needs warmth to survive. For another, Mirkwood, unlike populous Gondor, was never a center of advanced civilization or culture: it holds no great cities or fortresses. Fewer people present logically means fewer people died from the Plague. For yet another reason, Northmen are by and large lmners, a wandering and hearty collection of folk: they can survive in extreme conditions beyond the tolerance of many men, especially the "Higher Peoples" more closely akin to the Dúnedain. Northmen can tough it out.

More ominous for the future are reports of Nazgûl in the mountain paths to and from Mount Gundabad, and ever-more frequent sightings of roving gangs of orcs on the trails of Northern Mirkwood. Men had no way of knowing at this time that Sauron was making his move, sending frequent messages of strategic import to Angmar from his home in Dol Guldur, laying his plans for countering the Elves at Lórien and cutting their lifeline with their brethren at Thranduil's Caverns. Mirkwood's greatest defenses, Sauron will come to see, are its rivers and mountains and forest — and the folk who cherish them.

For two hundred years Mirkwood is left largely unscathed. Dwarves and Elves open their mighty doors, peek out and see that it's safe to resume their above ground forging and foraging, respectively; refugees of the Plague leave their northern hideouts in the inhospitable climes of the Grey Mountains and return to their homes and settlements on the Rhovanion plains and along the vales of the Anduin. Trade begins again with the Easterners — a pleasant change for the Elves, who enjoy Dorwinion wine; once more river traffic down the River Running resumes, connecting Mirkwood to the East. Homesteading Northmen of the Plains tend to their fields and animals. It is a time of hope and rebuilding in those years just after the onslaught of the Great Plague.

The Wainriders

Just two centuries later another ill wind from the East strikes at Northern Mirkwood, the shield to the kingdoms of the Dúnedain to the west. The 'Wainriders,' a swarthy and militant Easterling-folk, march in 1856 to conquer and enslave much of Mirkwood. Once more, Dwarves and Elves lie low while men suffer or flee. For forty-five years, until the Rhovanion princes and their men arose in revolt, the Wainriders brutalize Mirkwood's inhabitants. For the next 600 years, in skirmishes as well as battles the Wainriders and their relatives, the fearsome 'Balchoth' (aided by the orcs of the Grey Mountains) terrorize Mirkwood in their attempts to overrun Gondor to the south.



Northwest Endor, T.A. 1600-1900

Arrows depict thrust of Wainrider invasion, T.A. 1854. 1 Arthedain; 2 Angmar; 3 No Man's Land (Rhudaur); 4 Cardolan; 5 Core Territory of Gondor; 6 West Gondor, including the Westfold; 7 Calenardhon or North Gondor; 8 Gondor's Eastlands, weakly ruled after Great Plague of 1635-37, relinquished in 1854-55; 9 Harondor, contested by Gondor and the Corsairs of Umbar; 10 Wainrider Kingdom in Rhovanion 1854-99; 11 Umbar.

The Dwarves and Smaug

But not all bad luck befell the men of Mirkwood alone. In 1980, Dwarves mining for mithril in the Moria accidentally released a Balrog, the awesome "Demon-of-Might" that sent orcs yelping in fear as they fled for their lives. Fleeing the beauty and protection of their subterranean city, the Dwarves wandered for years before Thráin I, King of Durin's Folk, led his people to Erebor, where they founded the Kingdom under the Mountain in 1999. Soon after, in the heart of the Mountain, Thráin discovered the priceless jewel called the Arkenstone, which became the most-revered heirloom of Durin's Folk.

Shortly after its founding, the Kingdom Under the Mountain at Erebor was largely and somewhat mysteriously abandoned. Was its wealth mined out? The Dwarves return to Erebor rules that out. Did a dragon threaten them? Durin's Folk are known to fear the Great Worms. More likely gold or mithril was discovered in the Grey Mountains, so Thorin I led his folk there to found a new colony and mine the wealth. In 2590, the Dwarves led by Thrór returned to the Lonely Mountain, no doubt to mine more jewels and silver; they prospered at Erebor until 2770.

In that year, Smaug the Golden, the greatest of the Third Age winged fire-breathers, got wind of the newly-mined wealth of Erebor and with the straight-forward zeal of a covetous dragon, sacked the Mountain, roasted or drove off the Dwarves and settled into the Great Hall of Thrór to nest upon an inestimable bounty of gold, silver, mithril and gems, not to mention jewelry and arms defying description. For the better part of two cen-

turies Smaug ruled his roost at Erebor as the Dwarves, fighting-mad but disheveled and ill-at-heart, licked their wounds in the Iron Hills, the Blue Mountains and Eriador, where they worked dishearteldy as smiths and iron-mongers.

In his attack on the Dwarves at Erebor Smaug also laid waste to the town of Dale, where men had built a pleasant and profitable, unprotected town on the banks of the River Running. Within moments of his thunderous descent, Smaug made of Dale a barren, blackened wasteland. However bitter the remaining men of Dale were — **this**, they might have thought, looking around them at the wreckage of their community, **is what we get for befriending Dwarves** — they swallowed their feelings and ran south to Esgaroth, where most became fishermen. The mere threat of Smaug's return from Erebor was enough to discourage any resettlement of Dale or a return to Thrór's Halls for the next 170 years.

By the late 2700's, Thrór, King of the exiled (and slightly toasted) Dwarves, could live with himself no longer and resolved to return to Moria with only a single companion. Seized by orcs, he was brutally murdered and his body desecrated. Incensed Dwarves, hearing of the orcs' transgressions, mustered their forces and in 2799 met the Goblin-hosts in one of Middle-earth's most vicious hand-to-hand conflicts, the Battle of Azanulbizar. In this valley — sacred to Durin's Folk — lay the dark lake of Mirrormere into which Durin the Deathless gazed before founding Khazad-dûm; nearby stood the Stone of During itself. Fighting like avenging spirits, the Dwarves charged the orcs of Azog again and again, wielding their spears and axes savagely; both sides suffered terrible losses. In the end the Dwarves stood bloodied but victorious. However, so many of Durin's Folk died in the encounter that their bodies were piled up and burned, rather than be left to the wolves. No stone markers or elaborate cairns honored the dead; only in the memory of surviving Dwarves were the Burned of Azanulbizar treated with the dignity and respect due all fallen Dwarvish warriors.

In the middle of the twenty-eighth century, the wizard Gandalf reenters the history of Northern Mirkwood in a significant way. Finding the dying and tormented Dwarf King Thráin II in Sauron's fortress of Dol Guldur, Gandalf secured from him both the magic key to Erebor and a long-secret map of the Lonely Mountain. Armed with these instruments, and with the advice and consent of the White Council, the wizard was able to persuade Thráin's heir, Thorin Oakenshield to join him and others in the seemingly hopeless task of retaking the Lonely Mountain from Smaug. As recounted in Bilbo Baggin's narrative, *There and Back Again* (also known as *The Hobbit*), the unlikely adventurers were successful and in 2941, the Battle of Five Armies was fought beside what was left of Dale.

The Battle of Five Armies

In that fateful encounter, five armies met and clashed. Fighting to regain what was theirs and to oppose the oppression of Sauron's agents and the dragon's presence were the Wood-elves of Mirkwood led by Thranduil, the men of Esgaroth and Dale under Bard's leadership and Thorin Oakenshield's Dwarves; their enemies were the dreaded orcs of Azog and a horde of bloodthirsty Wargs, the orcs intent upon sacking Erebor once the battle was over. Aided by the Great Eagles and the mighty Beorn the Man-Bear, the Elves, men and Dwarves — after nearly rattling each other (Elves and men versus Dwarves) — routed and slaughtered the Goblin-hosts and Warg-hordes by the score.

In the aftermath of the battle the Dwarves' new King, Dáin Ironfoot (can't beat Durin's Folk for colorful names, can you) wisely granted the Wood-elves and the men of Esgaroth and Dale generous compensations for their efforts in re-seizing Erebor. Then the Dwarf-King Thorin Oakenshield, slain in the battle, was honorably buried with the Arkenstone on his breast and at his side, the magic Elf-Sword Orcrist. Bard the Bowman, slayer of Smaug, rode his laurels to political victory and as King of Dale rallied the survivors of the battle to aid him in rebuilding the once-thriving community.

The End of the Age

But for the magic magnetism of the Ruling Ring — Sauron's obsession throughout the Third Age — Northern Mirkwood might have been left alone to tend its wounds and slowly put itself back together in the final years of the Third Age. Through a heavily-fated series of exchanges, the One Ring passed through Mirkwood; Sauron's search for it, plus his desire to clear a path from Rhûn to the Misty Mountains and conquer the world, led to an Easterling assault on Dale once again, and in 3019 the Battle under the Trees of Mirkwood raged. Initially overwhelmed by the cruel and well-armed Easterlings, the Men of Dale and the Dwarves of Erebor — fighting to retain their adopted homelands — rallied behind a pair of new Kings and drove away their attackers. This victory — seized from the yawning jaws of defeat — took a great toll in lives, but at last the region gained a semblance of peace, and within a few years, something like prosperity.

Thus the Third Age — for most of Northern Mirkwood's inhabitants, an Age of dislocation, dejection and diminished power — closes not as it opened, with the shadow of Sauron darkening the forest, but with the bright sunshine of hope overhead. The once-mighty Wood-elves, now weary of strife, face the coming Fourth Age resigned to a lesser role and in declining cultural health. On the other hand, Durin's Folk, the Dwarves of Erebor, stand proud and secure (if reduced in number) in their underground home at the Lonely Mountain; not since the grand old days at Moria had they as a folk fared so well.

And last, the men of Mirkwood. United against the threat from the East, but split by vast cultural differences, the Northmen gaze out upon the first sunrise of the Fourth Age with renewed hope and reinforced vigor, for they — with the waning of the Elves and the reticence of the Dwarves — now stand as chief inheritors of Middle-earth's twin bounties of wealth and wonderment: their days of dominion are dawning.

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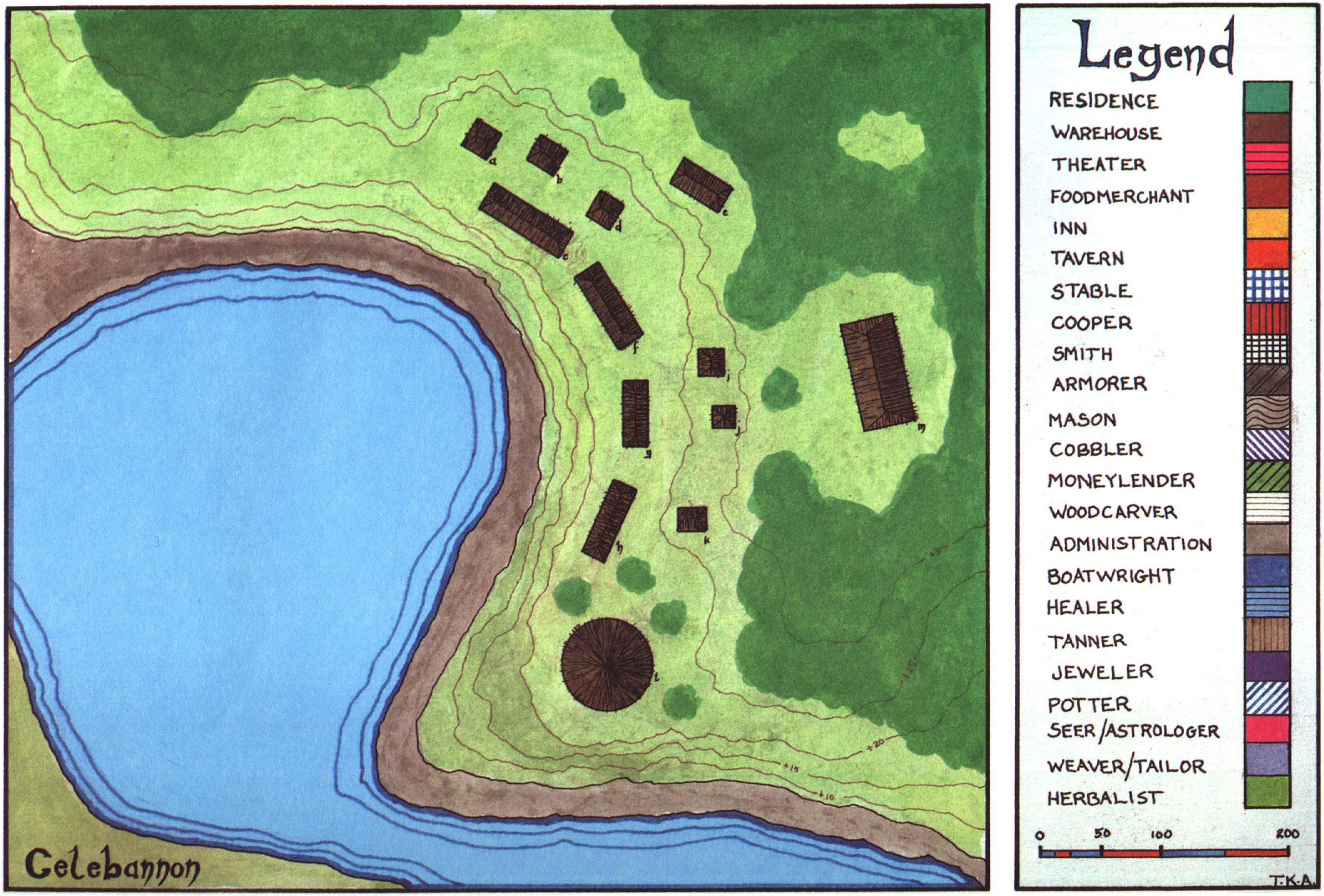
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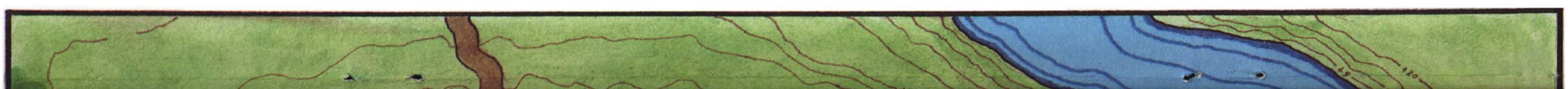


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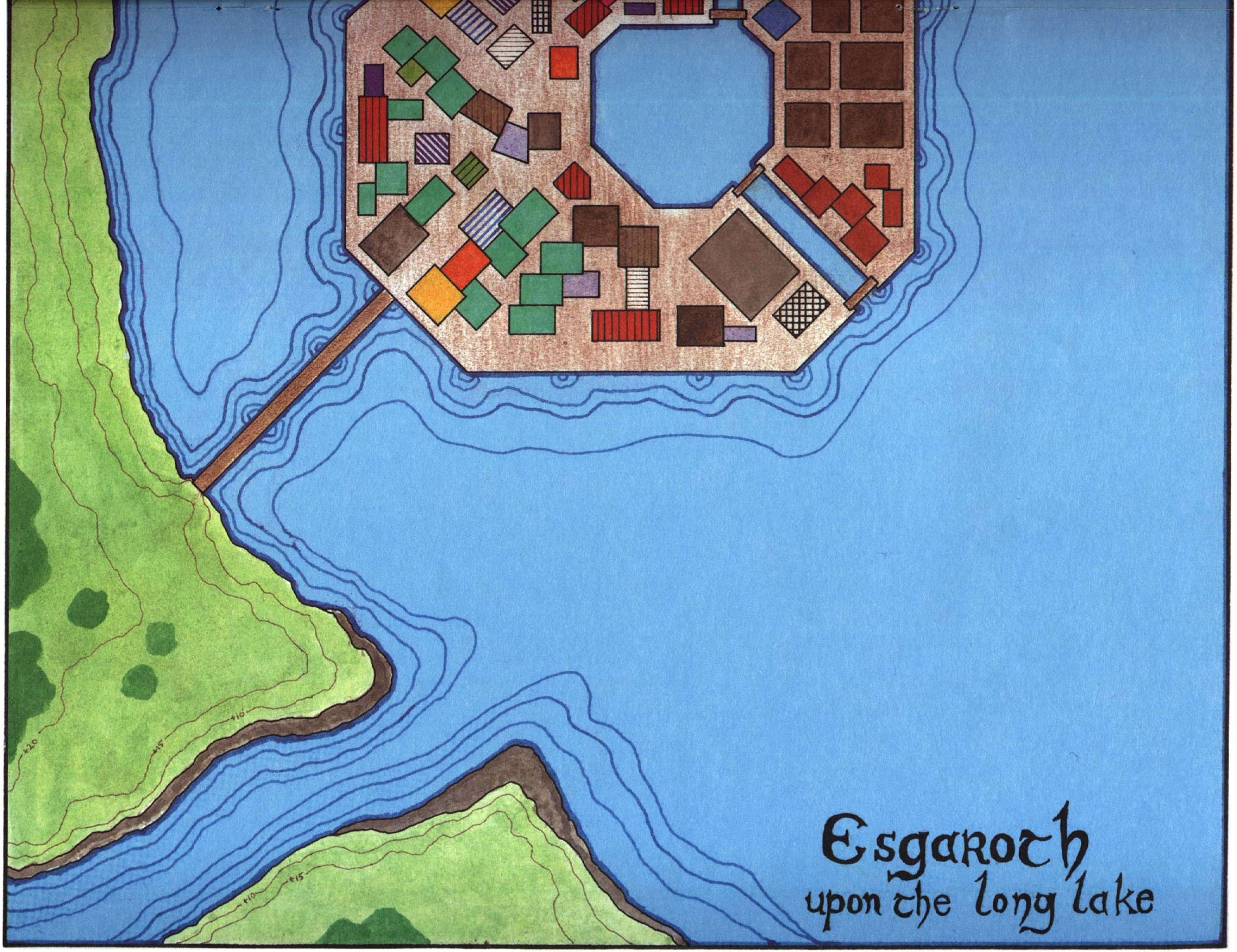
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Cirith Mithlin
Cirith himminond
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Gondmaeglom
Ered Mithrin


Erebor
Dale
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